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Daily Report

Central Eurasia

FBIS-SOV-93-055
Wednesday
24 March 1993

Daily Report
Central Eurasia

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Present Supreme Soviet 'Will Not Ratify' START II

LD2303162993 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 24 Mar 93 First Edition p 3

[Konstantin Eggert report: "The Ratification of START-II Could Fall Through, Unless Deputies Change Their Point of View"]

[Text] "The present Supreme Soviet will not ratify START II"—this was how a high-ranking functionary in the president's entourage commented on the postponement of the parliamentary hearings on this question announced on Monday [22 March].

This opinion on the whole coincides with the view of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Security Council, who are conducting an active but, it would appear, unproductive explanatory campaign among deputies. Both groups note a marked hardening of the position of parliamentarians—including members of the Committee for International Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations—with regard to START II.

According to information from informed sources in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the implacable opposition is seeking to drag out the discussion of the treaty, hoping to come to power and bury it once and for all. At the same time supporters of the moderate opposition will endeavor to rewrite certain articles during the debates. "Juridically speaking, this is irregular," an authoritative diplomat stated to IZVESTIYA. "During discussion it is possible to specify the interpretation of various points, but to change them is impossible. That requires new talks."

A well-informed Security Council staffer remarked that the nonacceptance of the treaty has become a kind of banner for deputies disposed against the president. They see START II in a purely internal political context. "There is not, nor can there be, a single serious argument against it," the Security Council spokesman said. He rejected as unfounded the arguments that START II changes the structure of the nuclear forces in our country while leaving it unchanged in the United States: "It is not a question of structure. The most important thing is that Russia's security will be reliably safeguarded even with 2,500 warheads" (let us recall that the treaty establishes a final figure for warheads in the following ratio: 3,000 to Russia, 3,500 to the United States).

The same high-ranking Security Council official said that the Council's experts assess the agreement positively. "However, the Security Council has not yet discussed this question," he remarked. "Let us wait until the relevant session is held."

Disarmament Expert Favors Nonnuclear Defense Systems

OW2203144693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1423 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Report by diplomatic correspondents Andrey Borodin, Dmitriy Voskoboynikov and Igor Porshnev; from the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature—following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The replacement of nuclear determent by non-nuclear defense systems opens much greater prospects than simple nuclear disarmament does, the vice president of the Russian Strategic Research Institute and a member of the London-based Institute for Strategic Research, Aleksandr Savelyev, told Interfax.

According to him, life has confirmed how right President Ronald Reagan was, when ten years ago, on March 23, 1983, he proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The former USSR strongly opposed the idea. At the height of the "cold war" Moscow believed that the Americans sought to gain unilateral advantages and undermine strategic stability. According to the USSR, SDI could be transformed into what it called "strike space weapons."

In the meantime SDI was a defense system from the start, since it provided for replacing nuclear systems with non-nuclear ones, and, consequently, for lowering the level of nuclear confrontation, the expert noted.

According to Savelyev, the fact that Russia and the USA no longer view each other as potential adversaries has dispelled fears connected with the possible gaining of superiority by means of deploying defense systems by one of the two sides. "The new threats to peace raised once again the issue of the role played by defense systems. The proliferation of nuclear missiles and the emergence of new nuclear powers, such as Ukraine, on the world map became the greatest threat," he said.

According to the expert, this paves the way for broad interaction between Russia and the USA. An agreement on this was reached in principle last year, when President Boris Yeltsin was visiting Washington. Groups have already been formed to work out the concept and technical details of a Russian-American program, which other countries can join.

ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 24 Mar

LD2403070793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0555 GMT 24 Mar 93

["Press Review"—ITAR-TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow March 24 ITAR-TASS—Newspapers highlight today the aggravated crisis of statehood in Russia. They publish articles by statesmen, public figures and scientists, as well as comments from provinces and other countries.

The government newspaper ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI carries a report about the Tuesday [23 March] speech of First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shumeyko under the headline "The nation should decide the destiny of Russia on its own." Shumeyko described the situation in the country as extremely acute. In his opinion, "the voting for the president and the new draft constitution will make it possible to go ahead with the economic reform."

The newspaper quotes chairman of the Russian Federal Information Centre Mikhail Poltoranin as saying that "today Russia is on the side of Yeltsin, and the president's team has levers at their disposal for putting their decisions into effect." In the opinion of Poltoranin, it is necessary to convene soon the constitutional assembly, which should adopt a new fundamental law, create a two-chamber parliament and confirm the need for the system of presidency in Russia.

The press reports that immediately after the president appealed to the nation, committees in his support began to be created all over the country. ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI carries interviews with two of them—from the Krasnodar territory (northern Caucasus) and Tula (central part of Russia).

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA frontpages an article under the headline "President violated Constitution, Constitutional Court says. Question of president's impeachment inevitable, Khasbulatov believes, while Yeltsin started publication of his decrees." According to the newspaper, the parliament is to set today the date of the next Congress of People's Deputies and its agenda. It is supposed to open on March 26.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA, publication of the parliament, carries an interview with Tatar President Mintimer Shaymiyev, who stressed that President Yeltsin had the right to appeal to the nation. Shaymiyev said he did not agree with Yeltsin's opinion that the questions about the main principles of the Constitution and about the federal government should be put to the referendum, but added: "Whatever happens in Moscow, we favour the integrity of the Russian Federation."

In the opinion of academician Oleg Bogomolov, a well-known economist, the decision taken by Yeltsin on Saturday "was, perhaps, the worst of all. First, it is at variance with the Constitution, and, second, it is fraught with the threat of the destabilisation and further split of the country." He believes that pre-term elections of both branches of authority would be a way to a constructive compromise.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA publishes an article about the political situation in the country under the headline "Situation in Russia continues to be complicated. Army remains calm."

In the opinion of PRAVDA, the root cause of the conflict between the legislative and executive branches of authority is that "the radical reform, implemented by the president and his team, has gone bankrupt." The newspaper carries a selection of letters of its readers criticising the president's performance. The newspaper writes, quoting the sources close to the government, that "Minister of Justice Nikolay Fedorov tendered his resignation on March 21, because he did not agree with the decision of the Russian Government to support President Yeltsin's appeal to the nation and the introduction of a special rule in the country."

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA carries an interview with Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, entitled "Russia facing no threat of president's dictatorship." In the opinion of Kozyrev, "the president is restoring law and order... as usual, he is taking the risks himself instead of putting others at risk. Unlike the opposition, he is not trying to protect himself against popular vote."

The newspaper publishes an article by Sergey Filatov, head of the Russian president's staff, which deals with the problem of corruption. "The information coming to the president's office, makes it possible to draw a very serious conclusion: corruption in Russia is turning into a political problem of national importance," Filatov wrote. In his opinion, corruption "affected all levels of the state apparatus, including the top level."

Clinton News Conference on Russia, Summit Viewed

LD2403092893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0847 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Andrey Loshchilin and Vladimir Matyash]

[Text] Washington March 24 TASS—"The United States supports the historic movement towards democratic political reform in Russia," U.S. President Bill Clinton told a news conference in the White House on Tuesday [23 March].

"President Yeltsin is the leader of that process, he is a democratic elected national leader. He is, after all, the first elected president in a thousand years. He has United States support, as do his reform government and all reformists throughout Russia," said the president.

Before taking questions, he spoke briefly on some foreign and domestic issues.

Clinton said, in particular: "At this moment, Russia is in a constitutional and political crisis. President Yeltsin proposes to break the logjam by letting the people of Russia decide on April the 25th. That is an appropriate step in a democracy.

"Our interest is to see that this process unfolds peacefully. We're encouraged that President Yeltsin is committed to defend civil liberties, to continue economic reform, to continue foreign policy cooperation toward a peaceful world. Russia is and must remain a democracy. Democratic reform in Russia is the basis for a better future for the Russian people, for continued United States-Russian partnership, and for the hopes of all humanity for a more peaceful and secure world", he pointed out.

When asked whether he would be willing to hold the summit meeting in Moscow, Clinton said: "As of this time, we have not received any indications that the Russians or specifically President Yeltsin and his government have any desire to change the site of the meeting or the time, so we are working very hard—indeed, I'm going to have a long session tonight to try to prepare for the summit at the appropriate date in Vancouver."

If no such request comes, Clinton said he would be guided by the previous plans. "I expect to spend a good deal of time this week consulting with congressional leaders of both parties and others what might have ideas about what we ought to put in our package, and I intend to go there with an aggressive and quite specific plan for American partnership," he said.

"The United States has three interests in our preparation with Russia," Clinton emphasised. "One is to make the world a safer place, continue to reduce the threat of nuclear war and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Two is to support the development of democracy and freedom for the people of Russia. It is a vast and great country—and indead for all of the Commonwealth of Independent States. And three is to support the development of a market economy."

U.S. Administration Attitude to Russian Crisis Assessed

PM2403091393 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 24 Mar 93 First Edition p 3

[Aleksandr Shalnev report: "Moscow Will Determine the Venue for the Summit"]

[Text] Washington—The White House is ready to treat seriously the question of switching the Russian-U.S. summit from Vancouver to Moscow, if a corresponding proposal comes from the Kremlin.

President Clinton decided to hold a special press conference on Tuesday, which will be wholly devoted to the current situation in Russia. Secretary of State Warren Christopher gave over his speech in Chicago on Monday exclusively to our problems. The talk in briefings held at the White House, where discussion is usually mainly about strictly internal problems, has been virtually only about Russia's affairs.

Although U.S. statesmen are not changing their traditional stance of not putting their money on one man, it is clear that the White House and Clinton personally are coming out entirely on Boris Yeltsin's side, continung to consider him the best hope for the success of reforms. It is also obvious that the White House is trying to force through the preparation and implementation of a series of measures to materially and morally reinforce the reform process. In particular, there is now talk of holding a meeting of the G7 20 April—that is, one week before the referendum—at the level of foreign and finance ministers, at which specific plans to aid Russia would be discussed.

The White House has also confirmed that at his meeting with Yeltsin Clinton will definitely announce a new program of assistance for Russian reforms. The details are still only being worked out, but the main avenues were outlined by Secretary of State Christopher in his Chicago speech. "The United States must hold out its hand to the Russian people—not the hand of pity, but the hand of partnership," the secretary of state stressed, adding that assistance to Russia "should be better coordinated and targeted than before, and focused on the regions where the effect would be greatest on the level of ensuring the long-term success of reforms."

Aid to Russia, judging by Christopher's remarks, will be concentrated in particular on reviving the oil producing industry ("oil will be a priceless source of hard currency income, which could be used to stabilize the Russian economy"); on a multiple expansion of exchange programs—exchanges of students, scientists, businessmen, and social and political figures ("We should strengthen the groups in Russia which will become the bulwark of a flourishing democracy"); on assisting the professional training of reporters and editors ("a strong, independent press is essential to a democratic society"); and on assisting privatization.

The secretary of state, who with his speech in Chicago was beginning a series of regular—monthly—appearances before a U.S. audience to explain various aspects of U.S. foreign policy, noted that the United States "should have no illusions: Even with our help the road to reforms will be difficult; the transformation of Russia will require huge and difficult work, and will probably take a whole generation." Christopher also remarked that "any realistic program of aid for Russian democracy will not be cheap. But there is no doubt that our country can afford this—it can afford to make its contribution to international efforts to aid Russia. I am sure that we will find the resources for this."

But Christopher did not hide that aid could encounter serious difficulties if the process of the democratization of Russia is marked by deviations from the norms of the democratic way of life. "The Russian people should be allowed to determine their own future by peaceful means, with civil freedoms being respected," the secretary of state said. "On this basis Russia can be sure of our full support."

Similar provisos were heard also in the White House, where George Stephanopoulos, while refusing to reply to a direct question from reporters about the significance of President Yeltsin's edict on the mass media, recalled, however: "President Clinton has already said that he considers civil freedoms extremely important, and expects these freedoms to be observed."

...Late on Monday evening [Russian Foreign Minister] Andrey Kozyrev arrived in Washington. The program of his visit includes meetings with Clinton, Christopher, Defense Minster Aspin, and leaders of Congress, and a speech at a U.S. university.

Kozyrev Says Russia 'Long Way From Civil War'

LD2303164493 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 23 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev said that the country is involved in political discussions and controversies, but it is a long way from civil war and chaos. He made this statement during a brief stopover in Ireland on his way to Washington. The situation in Russia will be among the principal topics in his talks with U.S. leaders today and tomorrow.

Yeltsin 'Source' Comments on Venue for Summit

OW2403095493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0925 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] "Preparations for the Russian-American summit in Vancouver (Canada) continue. However, the situation is changing and the final decision on the place of the summit will be taken later, most probably today," a high-ranking source in the Russian president's team informed INTERFAX on Wednesday [24 March] morning. He also said that the summit may take place in Moscow, not in Vancouver.

He noted that Boris Yeltsin would be informed of all possible variants, after which, by agreement with Bill Clinton, he will take a corresponding political decision.

Kozyrev Arrives in United States for Official Visit

No Discussion of Moving Summit

LD2303082793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0807 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Aleksandr Korolev and Georgy Shmelev]

[Text] Washington March 23 TASS—"We shall discuss primarily concrete questions linked with preparations for the American-Russian summit in Vancouver," Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev said immediately after his arrival in the American capital. He arrived there late on Monday evening [22 March] for a two-day working visit to thrash out some details linked with the forthcoming meeting between the U.S. and Russian presidents, scheduled for April 3-4.

Interviewed by ITAR-TASS, Kozyrev touched on Senator Robert Dole's suggestion to hold the meeting in Moscow instead of Vancouver. The minister said it was prompted by "the senator's traditional friendly attitude to Russia, his support to the ongoing reforms and democracy in our country." However, he noted that "no ideas to move the upcoming summit to some other place were discussed" at inter-government level so far.

Kozyrev's agenda envisages a meeting with President Bill Clinton, as well as two rounds of talks with Secretary of State Christopher. Planned also are meetings with the president's national security advisor Anthony Lake and other officials. The Russian foreign minister will also visit capitol hill to exchange views on a broad range of problems with leaders of the American Congress.

Commentary Views Kozyrev Visit

LD2303190293 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1410 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Yuriy Solton commentary]

[Text] Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev is visiting Washington. He has been scheduled to meet with his U.S. counterpart, Warren Christopher, and President Bill Clinton. A view of the prospects for Russian-U.S. relations from Yuriy Solton.

Andrey Kozyrev has arrived in the U.S. capital to complete preparations for a Russian-U.S. summit. The national leaders make no secret of what they are planning to discuss: bilateral cooperation, disarmament, local conflicts and, not least, the latest developments in Russia and increased confrontation between President Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament, which could change the picture somewhat. The issue of confidence is starting to dominate the summit's agenda—confidence in President Yeltsin, who staked his political future on the outcome of a nationwide referendum. He has fixed the referendum for the 25th of next month.

Washington is trying to guess how the domestic battles will influence Russian foreign policy. It has voiced unconditional support of the Yeltsin reforms. U.S. top officials have said nothing that could be interpreted as a suggestion for the postponement of the forthcoming summit. Preparations for the diplomatic event have been going on as scheduled. Moreover, to show support of President Yeltsin, the White House agrees to consider a possible change of venue from the Canadian city of Vancouver to Moscow. Secretary Christopher has told newsmen that President Clinton is going to make specific moves to help the Russian reforms. He said his country is going to step up action to help democracy in Russia. And Washington—it hopes other Western democracies will follow suit. Foreign Minister Kozyrev, on his part, feels increased Western support would help Russia join the community of civilized democracies.

The new developments have shed new light on the problem of disarmament. The Russian Parliament is to decide the fate of the second treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons, under which the United States and Russia would cut threefold their strategic nuclear arsenals. The Russian lawmakers may, however, decide to torpedo the early ratification of the treaty, which is regarded as President Yeltsin's brainchild. The president, who has pledged his total commitment for all international pledges, is acting on the assumption that the treaty will be enforced to make the universal hope for non-nuclear peace a reality. Both Russia and the United States are already taking steps to dismantle their nuclear missiles. Washington has pledged to earmark 400 million dollars of the Pentagon's budget to help Russia dismantle its missiles.

The importance of bilateral cooperation is growing in efforts to check many regional conflicts, too. Action on Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Angola and other flashpoints has come to require more than coordinated negotiations. The United Nations is considering ways to enforce, including the use of military force, its peacekeeping decisions. Joint efforts by the United States and Russia would do much in the context of joint UN actions. A Russian- U.S. summit would be instrumental in the context of efforts to map out a strategy for bilateral cooperation and, indirectly, influence the whole course of international developments.

Says Processes 'Under Control'

LD2303201793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1625 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondents Aleksandr Korolev and Georgiy Shmelev]

[Text] Washington, 23 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—The first round of talks between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev has begun at the U.S. State Department. A. Kozyrev arrived in Washington on Monday on a two-day visit within the framework of preparations for the Russian-U.S. summit, due to be held in Vancouver 3-4 April. The sides are agreeing the final details and the agenda for the talks between the two presidents.

"The situation must not be dramatized in any way. Everything is OK and the processes are under control," A. Kozyrev told journalists before the talks with W. Christopher. "I intend to discuss with the U.S. secretary of state the purely practical program of cooperation, of developing cooperation between Russia and the United States, of supporting the democratic reforms taking place in our country," he noted.

Discusses Issues With Secretary Aspin

LD2303202393 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2008 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Aleksandr Korolev and Georgiy Shmelev]

[Text] Washington, 23 March—Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, who is on a working visit here, has had a meeting with U.S. Defense Secretary Les Aspin. During their talks there was discussion of the present internal political situation in Russia and also of certain questions connected with the problem of the further reduction of armaments.

Discusses Issues With Christopher

LD2303211993 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2040 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Aleksandr Korolev and Georgiy Shmelev]

[Text] Washington, 23 March—The first meeting took place today between Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, who is on a working visit here, and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

The head of the U.S. foreign policy department spoke to journalists at the end of the talks, which lasted several hours. He said that there was discussion of all the specific questions of the forthcoming U.S.-Russian summit meeting in Vancouver on 3-4 April. The sides agreed on the procedure for holding the talks and on their agenda. The U.S. secretary of state said that there was also a detailed discussion of questions of the internal political situation and on expanding the assistance given by the United States and other Western countries for the democratic tranformations taking place in Russia.

Replying to questions from journalists, A. Kozyrev noted that the question of changing the venue of the summit meeting was not discussed during his talks.

Further on Kozyrev Meetings

LD2403043393 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0315 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Aleksandr Korolev and Georgiy Shmelev]

[Text] Washington, 24 Mar—On the first day of his visit to the U.S. capital, Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev had talks with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The heads of the foreign ministries of the two countries spent more than two hours together discussing details of the Russian-American summit in Vancouver, which is scheduled for 3-4 April.

As the U.S. secretary of state stated to journalists at the end of the meeting, concrete questions relating to the meeting of the presidents of the two countries in Vancouver were examined and an agreement reached on its procedure and agenda. "We expect concrete and tangible results from the summit, which would reflect the relationship of partnership and cooperation that exists between our two countries," W. Christopher stressed. "Russia is going through a historic period, and at this moment we would like to demonstrate our support for her...."

Apart from this there was a detailed discussion of the current political situation in Russia and ways in which the United States and other Western countries can facilitate the democratic transformations that are taking place in Russia, Christopher said. Answering journalists' questions, Kozyrev noted that a change of the summit's venue was not discussed during the talks. "There are no changes," he said. "We are concentrating our attention on preparing a good ground for a fruitful summit." He added that at present B. Yeltin's position is "sound," and "one should not dramatize the situation."

The Russian minister also paid a brief visit to the Pentagon, where he discussed with U.S. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin certain problems of further arms reductions. Toward the end of the day, A. Kozyrev visited Capitol Hill, where he had talks with the leaders of the American Congress: Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas Foley, George Mitchell, leader of the Senate's Democratic majority, and Republican Robert Dole, head of the minority faction.

As G. Mitchell has reported, "ways of extending our most extensive support for Russia," especially during this extremely important and serious period for her, were discussed.

Mayak Commentary on Christopher Speech

LD2303182593 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1330 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Commentary by observer Vladimir Pasko]

[Text] Meetings between ministers of foreign affairs, at least of Russia and the United States, usually cover many aspects. The whole range of questions—from bilateral relations to the situation in different regions of the world—are discussed by the ministers.

It seems to me that the present situation in Russia is making some changes in the order which has already been established. The United States made it clear that the priority during the negotiations with Kozyrev will be to help the Russian reforms. The leaders of Russia and the United States have the same opinion on support from outside: They both believe that it is not a decisive factor in Russia's transition to the market economy. But this support, nevertheless, plays its role. The problem is how to organize this support. The Clinton administration admits that there have been mistakes and delays here. They did not manage to organize wide support for the reforms. Serious entrepreneurs who own the main capital are still in no hurry to invest their capital in Russia. For example, 54 percent of Americans are speaking out against expanding help to Russia. Japan is making political demands.

Recognizing the necessity of support, the Clinton administration started a campaign to turn public opinion toward Russia. In his keynote speech in Chicago yesterday regarding the foreign policy strategy of the administration, Secretary of State Christopher directly linked help to Russia with the problem of security. He said that if Russia is in chaos or returns to despotism, the United States may face a new era of nuclear threat, an increase in the defense budget, the spread of instability, and the defeat of the democratic movement which has spread all over the world. He said that the United States will broaden and accelerate its efforts to support democracy in Russia and will try to persuade other countries in the West to do the same.

The speech by Christopher undoubtedly creates a favorable atmosphere for the negotiations with Kozyrev. However, it may come to nothing because of the situation in Moscow. Washington believes that Russia has come to the turning point in its development: The constitutional crisis has paralyzed Russian policy. The U.S. leadership evaluates very highly the appeal of President Yeltsin, who suggested that the people should express their opinion on the course which he is pursuing. President Yeltsin demonstrated once again his belief in the only force which is able to guarantee the success of the reforms—the Russian people, Christopher said.

However, nobody in Washington or anywhere else knows how this crisis will end. Of course, they are trying to estimate what will happen in the worst possible situation. I think this was what the secretary of state was thinking of when he said that it is very important for the United States—and I quote him—for Russia to remain a democratic country and continue to move toward the market economy. Christopher said that this is the only basis for a new U.S.-Russian partnership.

Secretary Christopher's Speech Reported

MK2403104693 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Mar 93 p 2

[Igor Drobyshev report under the "U.S." rubric: "America Still Hopes"]

[Text] New York—"The greatest strategic challenge of our time," is how U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher described the reforms being carried out by Boris Yeltsin.

Speaking on 22 March at the Council on International Affairs in Chicago, he said there was the need for giving Russia "major assistance" given its heightening internal political crisis. This speech was in effect the first extensive reaction of the White House to the recent events in Russia.

Stressing that Russia should remain "a democracy moving toward a market economy," Christopher warned that "if Russia plunges into anarchy or swings back to despotism, the price we will have to pay will be frightful..."

The unanimity with which President Clinton, his administration, and the Congress have expressed their support for, as they stress here, "the sole democratically elected president," does not remove, however, the difficult questions that the top spheres of American politics are trying to answer.

First, is the step that the Russian president ventured to take a lawful one?

The official view of the problem was formulated by White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos, who said that Yeltsin addressed people directly, which is "acceptable in democratic countries." What is followed here with interest and concern, however, are pronouncements by Russian Constitutional Court Chairman Valeriy Zorkin, who has earned the reputation in the American political community for being an objective and incorruptible judge.

Former defense minister Dick Cheney believes that the situation in Russia has once again demonstrated that the Clinton administration has chosen not a very appropriate moment for "serious cuts in defense expenditures, which go much farther beyond the level they (the Democrats—I.D.) were speaking about during the election campaign."

A lively discussion is under way about the possibility of moving the Russian-American summit from Vancouver to Moscow. The idea of this move was advanced by Senator Bob Dole, who said he feared that in Yeltsin's absence events in the country may take such a course that he may not be able to get back to Moscow to prepare and conduct a referendum.

Tellingly, both the Democrats and the Republicans are generally optimistic about Boris Yeltsin's fate, but with substantial reservations.

An interesting view of the course of events in the next few days and even hours was presented by Bob Lagovold [surname as transliterated], a political scientist at the New York-based Harriman Institute: "It is possible that a third force may come to the fore—a group of industrialists and the military, maybe some part of the government under Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. It might breach the impasse in which Yeltsin and the parliament have found themselves."

Japanese Prime Minister Reaffirms Support for Yeltsin

LD2403064993 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0624 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Solntsev]

[Text] Tokyo March 24 TASS—Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa on Wednesday again reaffirmed support for Russian President Boris Yeltsin's policy course towards carrying on democratic reforms in the country. In response to journalists' questions in the parliament building, the Japanese premier said he does not separate support for Yeltsin from support for reforms in Russia.

Meanwhile, according to Japanese Foreign Ministry staff members, Hisahi Owada, first deputy minister of foreign affairs, during a meeting with French President Francois Mitterrand in Paris on Tuesday, told him about Japan's intention to convene a G7 foreign and finance ministers' meeting in Tokyo in April to discuss aid to Russia.

The meeting is expected to be held on April 13-14. According to the NHK television network, Mr Owada also suggested that if necessary a special G7 summit, which the French president actively advocates, be held in Tokyo after the G7 ministerial meeting in April on aid to Russia.

Further on Japanese Support

PM2403102193 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 23 Mar 93 First Edition p 3

[Report by Sergey Agafonov: "Situation in Russia Unclear to Japanese but Tokyo Officially Supports Executive Power"]

[Text] Tokyo—Tokyo reacted very swiftly to President Yeltsin's television speech and the introduction of special rule—on Sunday morning words of support for the Russian reforms and the administration which is implementing them had already been heard through official channels. On Monday the same position was confirmed personally by Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and by Yokhey [name as transliterated] Kono, chief of the premier's secretariat.

The Japanese formula of support was, incidentally, preceded by stipulations that so far there is no clarity as regards what is happening in Russia and how events will go in the future. Miyazawa has avoided comment, citing the fact that it is not for him to speak of Russian problems of an exclusively domestic nature.

It is characteristic that the president's "counterattack," as Tokyo called Yeltsin's address, has not delayed but accelerated the process of elaborating decisions on "the Russian topic"—the Japanese side has published several new initiatives in this connection, among which a particular highlight is the idea of creating a 10 billion (dollar) fund for the needs of social protection, conversion, and the perestroyka of the economic infrastructure in Russia, in which Japan assumes one third of the necessary investments.

One more notable innovation in the Japanese position is the rejection of the linkage of aid from the "seven" with successful results in implementing reforms in Russia. Previously within the framework of debate inside the "Western club" Tokyo insisted that first there should be reforms and real successes and evidence of "the irreversibility of the process" and only then large-scale Western aid. Now it is to be supposed the Japanese side has become aware of the risk of ending up with no results at all and in addition a part was played by the unified "Euro-American bloc" which advocates emergency and immediate aid from the "seven" to Russia.

Last weekend, incidentally, its partners in the "seven" threw another large "stone" at Japan—German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel sharply denounced Tokyo for its reluctance to help Russia at such a crucial historical moment and defined Japan as the main obstacle in this important matter. Kinkel urged Germany and the United States to put additional pressure on Tokyo so that the Japanese side assumes the relevant commitments and thus shares the burden of aid. Japanese observers note the unprecedentedly sharp nature of Kinkel's statements and also the fact that now not only France but also Germany has publicly denounced Japan for its negligence over the Russian issue.

International Community Gives Yeltsin 'Absolute Support'

PM2303122593 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 23 Mar 93 First Edition pp 1,2

[Vladimir Nadein report: "Yeltsin Receives Absolute Support from the International Community"]

[Excerpts] Attempts to liken President Yeltsin's actions with the August 1991 putsch are being strongly disproved by facts, at least in one important sphere. The reaction of the international public has been distinguished by such a high degree of approval and support that it simply could not have been predicted even quite recently and even by the president's most active supporters.

Although the tapes of international news agencies are brimming with reports on the utterances of political leaders and mass media, there is not a single one among them in which the Russian president's recent measures have been subjected to the slightest condemnation. [passage omitted]

Not a single one of the numerous agency reports, and not a single one of the newspapers to which we have access, confirm R. Khasbulatov's words that Russia has become a laughing stock on the world stage. There is anxiety over the outcome of the conflict, there is a readiness to help, and there is even self-criticism because of insufficiently generous aid given to Russia.

But there is no mockery, no gloating, and no condemnation of the president. However, many official representatives are issuing evident condemnations of the congresses and the Supreme Soviet. "The actions of the Russian deputies... were unilateral and directed against the president," an official German government spokesman said. "The Russian parliament is not yet a fully democratic structure," Hungarian Foreign Minister Geza Jeszenszky stated.

It is not just leaders of administrations, but also the parliamentarians of other countries who are condemning the parliament. Certain deputies appealed in vain for the U.S. experience at the Sunday session. Leaving aside long-term discussions, both leading parties supported President Clinton in his active understanding and approval of B.N. Yeltsin's position.

The bipartisan policy of U.S. Congress consists in unequivocal accord on the importance of the two presidents' meeting in Vancouver, and indeed R. Dole, the leader of the Republicans in the Senate, told Clinton not to distract Yeltsin from important things but to go to Moscow himself, an idea which, as subsequent signals show, is being very carefully studied in the White House.

Who Has Reserved Judgment?

It is a typical scenario of finding it hard to count who is "in favor" when there is no one whom you can count in response to the question "who is opposed?" and all hopes, or rather, all calculations, are pinned on those who have reserved judgement.

The least direct reaction has come from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Only E. Shevardnadze of Georgia and Ukrainian President L. Kravchuk expressed support for the measures taken by B. Yeltsin—but with reservations and riders.

According to IZVESTIYA's own correspondent S. Gamova, President M. Snegur of Moldova is preparing a special message to circulate on Monday evening. Parliamentary Chairman P. Lucinschi confined himself to wishes that the conflict will be resolved "by democratic means."

Armenian President L. Ter-Petrosyan told IZVESTIYA's correspondent S. Bablumyan that such contradictions in many countries of the former USSR can be explained by the lack of new constitutions clearly delimiting the functions of the authorities. Stability in Russia may be reached by means of adopting a new Constitution with the help of a nationwide referendum, Ter-Petrosyan said.

Among the "fairly near" neighbors, as the participants in the former socialist camp are sometimes called, approval of Yeltsin's measures is clearly more resolute, and there are significantly fewer reservations.

"For the majority of world leaders, it is perfectly clear that it is Boris Yeltsin who now represents the best guarantee of democratic transformations in Russia," a Hungarian government spokesman said.

From the statement of the Polish Foreign Ministry: "Boris Yeltsin has announced actions which... create the conditions for a resolute solution to the crisis."

Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev: "The formally undemocratic act (of B. Yeltsin) was dictated by the need to stop the impending communist restoration and is aimed at preventing growing chaos and lawlessness in Russia."

"The whole world has an interest in Russia not giving up the advance toward democracy and the market economy," Czech President Vaclav Havel said, calling B. Yeltsin the "guarantor" of this advance. If you place French President F. Mitterrand, who believes that recent events in Russia are an indicator of the need to increase assistance to Russia urgently and sharply, on one flank, and Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa, who supports B. Yeltsin's measures, albeit with restraint, but without mentioning the problem of the islands, on the other flank, then almost all the countries of the world can be placed in between.

Canada has confirmed its "resolute support" for Yeltsin and its readiness to hospitably host the Russian-U.S. summit.

South Korea, according to its Foreign Ministry, is on Yeltsin's side.

Spain, Italy, Great Britain, Finland...

Very Close to the Edge

The countries of the world have expressed support for Yeltsin for very similar reasons. Therefore it is hard to single out particular countries. However, two statements deserve special attention in connection with the nature of the criticism which is being voiced not abroad, but here in soviet structures.

One of the most important accusations in respect of Yeltsin's announcement was that it would mean the imminent collapse of Russia. If the president had refrained from taking such resolute steps, Khasbulatov, Zorkin, and other critics maintain, then the threat of the country's collapse would be significantly smaller.

The German Government assesses the problem completely differently. At first sight their approach could be construed as based on the conclusions of figures such as Khasbulatov and Zorkin on the grounds that our people are a position to see things see more clearly.

However, Germany's interest in Russia is particularly special. Germany is not just a neighbor in the fragile European home. Russia, as the successor to the USSR, owes its German partner over $48 billion. As Chancellor H. Kohl believes, a weak Russia, which is falling apart, will never return this gigantic sum or even a modest part of it. Only a strong, prosperous country is in a position to to pay off such a debt. And Germany sees B.N. Yeltsin as the guarantor of such an outcome.

The second accusation is connected with the threat of civil war. A war in comparison with which Yugoslavia "would seem like a peaceful spot," as U.S. Senator S. Nunn observed.

Austria is not just a neighbor of Yugoslavia. Austria, the capital of the former empire that included all the currently warring sides, remains a center of common history and deep understanding of regional problems even today. Hence the extreme sharpness with which Vice Chancellor E. Busek literally pounced on the Western countries which did not give the necessary assistance to the Russian president's efforts.

The Main Analysis is Ahead

Mass media do not usually spare the self-respect of political leaders too much. Newspapers stand on ceremony with presidents far less than presidents do with each other.

However, in this case, B. Yeltsin is dealing with a very rare phenomenon. His recent actions, which were very favorably received by official structures, are being greeted with understanding in observers' very first comments.

More on International Reaction

PM2403100193 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 23 Mar 93 p 3

[Aleksandr Golts report: "The World Wants To See a Stable and Democratic Russia"]

[Text] President Yeltsin's address on television to the Russian people this Saturday [20 March] and the events which ensued have, I think, upset the weekend routines of foreign states' leaders. They had to determine their standpoints toward what was taking place in Russia as a matter of urgency. If we are to summarize the reactions which have been received, we can establish the following: The world would like Russia to continue to move toward democracy and toward creating a market environment. It would like it to travel this path in a civilized manner, in conditions of stability.

The majority of foreign leaders, if we are to judge by reports in the mass media, consider the Russian president to be this process's main guarantor. "The United States supports the historic move toward democracy and the free market in Russia," the U.S. President says in a statement. "Russian President Boris Yeltsin is leading this process. As Russia's only democratically elected national leader, he enjoys our full support, as does his reformist government." The leaders of both parties represented in the U.S. Congress also spoke in support of the democratic process and the Russian president. Robert Dole, leader of the Republicans in the Senate, even proposed conducting a Russian-American summit meeting not in Vancouver but in Moscow.

Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stated that he "supports President Yeltsin's decision to grant the Russian people the opportunity to exercise their right to determine their own future." The FRG Government takes an understanding view of the measures which Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin has taken or intends to take to avert an internal political crisis, Dieter Vogel, an official spokesman of the Bonn cabinet, stated.

The leaders of the East European states stated their views on this matter even more definitely. Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev said: The measures which President Yeltsin has announced concerning special rule until 25 April "aim initially to prevent chaos and anarchy, toward which Russia is moving." Czech President Vaclav Havel said: I believe that Boris Yeltsin's decision will lead to the present crisis in Russia being settled. It is a question of the people being able to express their wishes regarding the constitutional system in a referendum, and of this people being able to elect in free parliamentary elections those people who will represent the wishes of Russian citizens. Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Geza Jeszenszky said: The Hungarian cabinet supports Boris Yeltsin as the initiator and defender of the democratic transformations in Russia.

A significant group of states nevertheless preferred to display a more cautious approach and attempted to distance themselves from the internal political conflict in Russia. For example a statement by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs press secretary says that the Japanese Government has supported President Yeltsin's reforms and hopes very much that this course will continue to be maintained in the future. The Japanese Government expresses the resolute hope that the policy of reforms will receive the people's support and will be maintained under conditions of stable relations between the Russian parliament and government.

Great Britain also restricted itself to expressing support for the policy of reforms, having tellingly emphasized that it welcomes the Russian Government's adherence to principles of democracy and civil rights.

The Italian Government expresses the great hope that the decisions which President Yeltsin has made do not cause the serious political difficulties in Russia to be exacerbated, an Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement says. It emphasizes that the Italian Government is satisfied with the intention to guarantee fundamental human rights and to ensure that elections are held democratically.

The situation in Russia gives cause for concern, but for the moment it is too early to assess the measures which President Boris Yeltsin has announced, as well as the vote on Russia's future planned for 25 April, Gareth Evans, Australian minister of foreign affairs and foreign trade, says in his statement.

Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Javier Solana expressed the hope that the measures which Yeltsin has announced will help to bring the situation in Russia out of deadlock, and emphasized that his government has been following with alarm how the situation has been developing in recent days. I think that the Spanish minister said aloud what many people are hinting at. The whole world really is seriously concerned about how things will develop in Russia. We should not forget that despite all the vagaries of the internal political struggle, we remain a great power, and the situation here has a most serious effect on international stability.

Ministry Notes U.S. 'Apology' for Submarine Collision

LD2303180293 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1702 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, 23 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—The information and press department of the Russian Federation Foreign Ministry today issued a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman's statement. It says:

As is known, there was a collision between a Russian and a U.S. submarine in international waters in the Barents Sea on 20 March. Fortunately, there were no casualties, and both submarines received only superficial damage.

The U.S. Defense Department has issued an official statement which notes the fact of an accidental collision in a given area between a U.S. nuclear submarine Grayling and a Russian submarine. The U.S. side has sent us an apology through diplomatic channels, assuming responsibility for what occurred, and has given an assurance of its intention to take the necessary measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The Russian side takes cognizance of the U.S. side's assurance in this matter.

This incident—by no means the first of its kind—is connected with the continuing intensive activity of U.S. Naval Forces close to Russian territorial waters in areas where the training grounds of the Northern and also the Pacific Ocean fleets are deployed.

This incident reaffirms the urgent need to achieve an accord on a substantial reduction or complete suspension, on conditions of reciprocity, of the activities of Russian and U.S. Naval Forces in the waterways of the seas which wash the seaboards of both the Russian Federation and the United States.

'Significant Progress' at U.S. Grain Export Credit Talks

PM2303113993 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 7

[Igor Petrov report under the "World and Us" rubric: "Grain Credits: A Short Time-Out"]

[Text] ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI has already written about the situation which has developed in Russia's grain market and the problems with supplies of grain from the United States and Canada which have emerged in connection with delays in the repayment of our debts.

The Russian-U.S. talks on this range of questions, which ended in Washington recently, did not have a positive outcome, unfortunately. However, to adjudge them a failure would also be unfair to say the least. Even though agreement was not reached on the main question—the resumption of the government credit guarantees for agricultural export programs to Russia—significant progress was made nevertheless.

First of all the sides agreed to reinstate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's previously granted credit of $215 million under which Russia has already been given a letter of credit. Now it is a question of awaiting approval from the banks. The Russian delegation also proposed that a proportion be allocated to Russia from the former USSR's general "grain debt." According to the experts' assurances, Russia has been meeting all its debt commitments to the letter and does not owe the U.S. grain exporters a cent today. Furthermore, the Russian side has expressed readiness to pay all the bank interest early—that is, in effect to pay for the future grain supplies in advance.

In a statement to your ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI correspondent, L. Cheshinskiy, president of the "Roskhlebprodukt" Federal Contract Corporation, expressed complete confidence that the two countries' experts will be able to find an acceptable solution to the present situation before the Russian and U.S. presidents meet in April. Especially since this is in the two sides' interests.

The discussion of a program to provide credit on preferential terms for grain exports to Russia has also begun in Washington. It will continue at subsequent meetings.

Clinton's Support for Haiti's Aristide Welcomed

PM2303135593 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 3

[Commentary by Mikhail Ikonnikov: "Bravo, Mr. Clinton"]

[Text] The recent meeting between the head of the U.S. Administration and Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the exiled, but at the same time entirely lawful, president of the Caribbean island state of Haiti was comparatively brief. But in its content and tone it illuminated a great deal.

Whether the participants in the discussion wanted it or not, the main result of their dialogue is consonant with the standpoint of... progressive-thinking politicians of the Western hemisphere. The return of Aristide to the Haiti capital of Port-au-Prince, the restoration there of constitutional legality, the immediate transition to socioeconomic reforms, and the rescue of hundreds of thousands of islanders from death through famine—in the opinion of the participants of the meeting, this is the priority task for the whole region today.

It is with reluctance that one recalls the different, inflammatory emphasis of G. Bush, who reduced all the woes of the Carribbean to the existence of the "Marxist-Leninist regime in Havana." However, today Washington is confirming, albeit obliquely, what has long been the assessment of the United Nations: The true pole of poverty and lawlessness south of U.S. shores is not socialist Cuba, but another island separated from it by the Windward Passage and traditionally in the U.S sphere of influence—Haiti. A conclusion, you will agree, highly symptomatic...

Of course, the support which the White House is offering to Aristide reveals above all a pragmatic motive: Only by stabilizing the situation in Haiti can the mass illegal emigration of Haitians to the United States be kept to a minimum. While during the election campaign B. Clinton criticized G. Bush for his cruelty to "the boat people" and hinted at future liberalization of immigration legislation, today, forced in his new capacity as President to reckon with the isolationist tendencies of his fellow citizens, he is visibly modifying his position.

There is, however, another side to the coin. In trying to maintain the U.S Democratic Party's reputation as the party of liberals, legalists, and humanists, the head of the present administration revives memories of the presidency of J. Carter. In the seventies the latter made a point of turning his back on Duvalier, Somoza, Stroessner, and other Latin American dictators, at the same time softening attacks on Cuba. If things are again taking such a positive turn, it only remains to say: "Bravo, Mr. Clinton!"

Government Statement on Georgia-Abkhazia Conflict

PM2303152793 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 Mar 93 p 2

[Russian Federation Government Press Center report: "Russian Federation Government Statement"]

[Text] The situation surrounding Russian Federation military subunits and installations in the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict zone has seriously deteriorated in recent days. At a time of intensified military operations there, a hostile political and propaganda campaign has been launched against them by the Georgian side; moreover, aggressive acts which pose a threat to the lives of servicemen and their families are being undertaken. Although the Russian military subunits continue to observe strict neutrality and are taking no part whatsoever in combat operations, they are subjected to groundless charges of taking part in bombardments and other military actions in the conflict zone.

Despite the Georgian side's repeated assurances that it does not fire on Russian positions, and depsite our appeals and warnings on this score, the seismic laboratory in Sukhumi and the military sanatorium of the Russian Federation Defense Ministry in Esheri were subjected to air and artillery bombardment by Georgian armed formations on 17 March, which resulted in five civilian personnel being killed and eight wounded.

The Russian Federation Government condemns this criminal military act resulting in the death of Russian citizens and demands that action be taken against those to blame. The Georgian side must immediately stop such armed provocations and halt the slander campaign against Russian servicemen.

In rejecting the unfounded charges the government states with full responsibility that Russian military servicemen are maintaining strict neutrality and are not involved in combat operations in the conflict zone.

The blame for prolonging and exacerbating the conflict must not be shifted on to Russia or Russian servicemen. It is the reliance on military force and the reluctance of the two sides in the conflict to call a cease-fire and sit down at the table to negotiate a peaceful settlement that are the cause of the prolongation of this senseless and inhuman bloodshed.

The Russian Government urges both sides involved in the conflict and the leadership of Georgia and Abkhazia to cease combat operations forthwith and effect practical measures to establish dialogue and resume the negotiation process on the basis of the final document of the Moscow meeting of 3 September 1992. Such a path has been approved by the United Nations and the whole world community. We are ready to do everything to promote a peaceful solution.

The Russian Federation is invariably guided in its relations with the Republic of Georgia by the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Georgian state. The Abkhazian conflict can and should be resolved by a political settlement which should be based on respect for the legitimate rights and interests of both the Georgian and the Abkhazian peoples.

Krasnodar Kray Considers Closing Border With Georgia

LD2403120593 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0800 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] Documents aimed at stepping up protection of the Russia-Georgia border and on introducing a visa regime have been drawn up. The border problems are to be examined at a session of the lesser soviet of Krasnodar Kray on 25 March. Valentin Burlachenko, deputy head of Krasnodar Kray's Directorate of Internal Affairs, gave this information to an RIA correspondent. He believes that a decision to close the border will be adopted. Valentin Burlachenko said it is vital that the border issue be sorted out since criminal elements from the Transcaucasus, using the confusion in the area of the Abkhazian-Georgian conflict, are constantly entering Russia.

Air Force Chief Accuses Ukraine Over Strategic Bombers

LD2303225693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2048 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS]

[Text] Moscow March 23 TASS—"If Ukraine does not pass over to Russia heavy bombers within the next few months, the aircraft will run out of order and be good only for scrap metal," believes Russian Air Force Commander-in-Chief Air Force Colonel Petr Deynekyn.

Over 160 strategic heavy bombers are now based on territory of the former Soviet Union, 70 per cent of them are modern TU'95MC aviation complexes and TU'160 with long-range high-precision cruise missiles on board. They are capable of using up to 1,000 nuclear warheads in a volley, which corresponds to the treaty on strategic offensive armaments.

However, disintegration of the Soviet Armed Forces resulted in location of over one half of the aviation component of the strategic nuclear forces on territories of two sovereign states—Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The rest is on Russian territory, which is the successor of the former Soviet Union.

If the Kazakh transition of strategic air regiments to Russia is being positively solved to a certain degree, the Ukrainian leadership uses various pretexts to abstain from this act. At the latest meetings they asked for two billion roubles for each TU'160 aircraft.

Thus, Ukraine violates not only the agreement on collective security, adopted by the Commonwealth member-states, but also ignores requirements to a state, which has told the whole world about its non-nuclear status.

Special bodies for control over the strategic forces created under the Ukrainian Defence Ministry have led to the violation of centralized forces' management and lowering of their combatability.

Today the aircraft are actually not used, maintenance work is not done, and pilots are losing professional skills, said Deynekyn. Russia insists on passing over the above-mentioned regiments to the Russian long-range aviation within two or three months on mutually acceptable conditions.

He stressed if Ukraine and Kazakhstan do not accept Russian proposals, Russia, as the successor of the former Soviet Union, will not be able to fulfill its international obligations on nuclear issues.

'Powerful Bloc' Seeks To Isolate Russia From Europe

PM2303154593 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 93 First Edition p 1

[ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA/ITAR-TASS report: "In Total Secrecy"]

[Text] Information has been obtained from competent sources about active consultations among the leaders of Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Baltic countries.

These talks are aimed at creating a powerful bloc capable of completely cutting Russia off from active cooperation with Europe and depriving it of its dominance in the Black Sea region (the creation of a buffer zone). This work is being done in complete secrecy.

G-7 To Meet in Tokyo in Apr To Discuss Russian Aid

OW2303174193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1713 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The next G7 meeting on assistance to Russia will apparently take place in Tokyo in April, and will be held by the foreign and finance ministers of the G7 countries, a senior official at the Russian Foreign Ministry told Interfax. He said Tokyo might be chosen as the venue in order "not to hurt the Japanese," whereas the reason why the meeting would be held by foreign and finance ministers was arrange a meeting of G7 heads of state or government would be technically impossible.

The official said it was true that Russia had asked G7 and some international financial organizations to give it more than $20 Bn [billion] this year.

Reasons for West's 'Feeble Aid' Effort Eyed

PM2303174393 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 20 Mar 93 p 2

[Observer Aleksandr Golts article under "Topic of the Week" rubric: "This Feeble Aid"]

[Text] A curious phenomenon is to be observed in Russia. Things which do not actually exist become, one after another, the focus of public attention and the most heated discussion. That is the case with the notorious "red mercury." No matter how scientists issue assurances that a substance with such characteristics does not exist, you get constant reports that it is being traded and even exported from Russia. Something similar is happening with the foreign aid for our economic reforms. Everyone has been talking about it for years, but it does not go beyond talk. Another flurry of discussion on this score, and at the level of world leaders, occurred this week.

People will be aware of its cause. Perhaps the main positive result of the Eighth Congress was the fact that the leaders of the leading Western countries tore themselves away from their own problems and remembered Russia. They saw the political confrontation occurring in our country not just as a threat to the reforms but, and this is far more important to them, as a threat to international stability. Ignoring Kissinger's appeal that they keep out of Russia's domestic political struggle, they have thrown all the might of their authority into supporting President Boris Yeltsin.

There is no denying that the chill wind of internal Russian confrontation distinctly blowing from Moscow really energized the Western leaders. The most resolute—FRG Chancellor Kohl and French President Mitterrand—began calling for an emergency G7 meeting devoted solely to the topic of Russian aid. The U.S. President is not as yet in any hurry to endorse this idea. He, clearly, would like to confine himself to a conference of finance and foreign ministers. Finally, Tokyo bluntly questioned the need for such a meeting.

In my view, the problem is not the meeting itself, nor the level of representation at it. The problem is what kind of aid the West could offer Russia on this occasion. Let's be frank—to date, experience of assistance for the Russian reforms has been mainly negative in character. The assistance program operated via the IMF which was planned one year ago has essentially failed, and the problem here is not even the $6 billion stabilization fund which simply failed to materialize. The failure lies mainly in the fact that the program has simply failed to become the bridge across which major capital would be channeled into Russia.

What, then, does the West intend to do this time? No specific proposals are known of as yet. But, judging by newspaper articles, it has been decided to abandon all-embracing projects and to concentrate on two main areas. First, helping specific enterprises carry out structural reorganization. This affects first and foremost enterprises in the military-industrial complex. Second, carrying out programs to give social protection and help to those deprived of work and the wherewithal to live.

At first glance, this is a realistic approach. But it would be very interesting to find out how the resources will be allocated to those ends and how their use will be monitored. It is no secret that in today's financial situation in Russia only the altruist—and none have been spotted here—is going, on obtaining hard currency, to purchase equipment, retool production, and train the workers. Why take the risk of getting involved in manufacturing a product when it is a hundred times more profitable to use the money to buy up poor-quality consumer products and immediately sell them on, and then repeat the exercise? That is why the bulk of the funds assigned us to date have languished in foreign banks.

And where is the guarantee that the new credits do not have the same fate in store? That is the way it will be until Russian finances are put in order, until inflation is curbed.

Now, let's suppose these measures are implemented. Even then it is highly questionable that reputable investors will make their way hotfoot to Russia in conditions of political, economic, and social instability. Vice Premier Aleksandr Shokhin is counting on a breakthrough here after the adoption of laws on foreign investments, free economic zones, and concessions, work on which laws is coming to an end. But the problem resides not just or so much in the laws as in their execution. And no political blather, talk about the strategic importance of investments, or calls by the government itself will force Western business to risk their hard-earned money.

Does this mean that the West cannot help us in any way until then? Not altogether so. It is vitally important for Russia that an agreement revising the foreign debt repayment arrangements be reached in the near future. The opportunity for this has opened up, inasmuch as an accord has emerged between Russia and Ukraine on how to divide up the USSR's foreign assets and debts. But if this does occur, such a decision can only create the favorable conditions for the development of the Russian economy.

Therefore the creation of normal conditions for exports from Russia, and even their encouragement by reducing customs and other tariffs, would be equally significant. This involves giving Russians the chance to earn hard currency themselves. And this is where problems start, since effective Russian exports mean that Western leaders' "home" industries will run into difficulties. And those very governments which talk about the need to give us economic assistance are simultaneously restricting our exports in the toughest fashion. In the opinion of specialists, these restrictions are resulting in annual loses of $3 billion.

Moreover, at a recent conference at the U.S State Department devoted to questions of aid it was frankly stated that it makes no sense to encourage capital investments in those sectors of Russian industry which could become future competitors for the Americans.

In the relatively liberal twenties one wit answered the poll question "Do you sympathise with Soviet power?" with "I do, but cannot help in any way." I fear that Western leaders should have to admit precisely that if they ventured to talk frankly about their attitude toward the Russian reforms. I have no intention of questioning their sincere desire to assist us. But you cannot ignore the fact that their scope is limited. On the one hand, you have an extremely uncertain economic situation in Russia and growing political struggle here. On the other, you have their unpreparedness to disregard—to even a small extent—their own economic interests.

That is why their aid has been so feeble to date. I have no doubt that this is also understood in the West. But at the same time they continue to make a big fuss, based on the completely false premise that, as THE NEW YORK TIMES wrote, "assurances in support of Yeltsin could help him deal with the challenge thrown down by his political opponents." I think that talk about providing aid which is not backed up in the eyes of Russians by actual results could indeed become very strong trump cards. But in the hands of the president's adversaries. I do not know whether real aid will be given us or not, but I am sure that it is time to stop this endless talk.

Moscow To Support Bosnia-Herzegovina 'No-Fly Zone'

OW2303174493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1713 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia will apparently support the resolution of the United Nations Security Council introducing a "no fly zone" over Bosnia-Herzegovina, a senior official at the Russian Foreign Ministry told Interfax. "The fact that Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev is in the United States at present is making things much easier," he said.

The official said Moscow had not stated its position on the matter for over three months was that it had been opposed to the measure. "Now, however, the potential for maneuver has been exhausted," he said.

The only problem, he said, were the repercussions Moscow's support for the resolution could have within Russia. However, "those who are fond of criticizing the Foreign Ministry should realize that the resolution would be neither anti-Serb nor, of course, anti-Yugoslav," he said.

Bonn 'Devising Strategy' To Support Russian Reforms

PM2303153793 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 20 Mar 93 First Edition p 3

[Report by Yevgeniy Bovkun: "Bonn Devising Strategy To Support Russian Reforms"]

[Text] Bonn—The general anxiety in the West over the future of the Russian reforms is aggravated in Bonn by two circumstances. First, they want to estimate in advance what losses the German economy will sustain if the reforms fail in Russia. After all, the FRG has spent far more than its Western partners—80 billion Deutsche marks—just in humanitarian aid for the CIS countries. Second, Bonn would not like to lose its role of broker in the formation of new relations between East and West.

The long-term strategy for Western support for the Russian reforms is in the elaboration stage, although even now you can say that the basic contours have been defined. Bonn's idea is that since there is a struggle between a "democratic president and nondemocratic parliament," the West will resolutely support Yeltsin's reforms on condition that this support does not conflict with Western notions of constitutionality.

Bonn also puts forward the following argument in favor of resolute and cohesive joint action to give support to the Russian reforms: If the reforms fail, the "peace dividend" will also decline sharply, that is, the advantage the West gained as a result of the end of the cold war will be neutralized.

In this connection FRG political circles are increasingly talking about the need to be more vigorous about involving Russia in the structures of European and international security.

Bonn is also proposing that Russia become more intensively involved in Western structures in the economic sphere.

Industrial circles are again discussing the issue of investments in Russia. The general conclusion is that, despite the caution over the large number of risk factors, it is necessary, without risking an enterprise's fixed capital, to take steps facilitating the rapid development of new business contacts.

Bonn is finally beginning to notice that the confrontation between parliament and president does not actually reflect all that is happening in Russia. One thing is clear, the newspaper FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE concludes: The congress of people's deputies does not have authority in the country and does not have the population's support, but is more a "playground for the representatives of the predemocracy Constitution."

EBRD President Urges 'Large-Scale' Aid From West

LD2303142893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1124 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Viktor Solomin]

[Text] London March 23 TASS—Jacques Attali, president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), came out in support of reforms which are being effected in Russia. In an ITN interview on Monday [22 March], he stated the need for the West to give large-scale financial aid for these purposes, which, he said, would contribute to overcoming the acute political crisis.

Now as never before, there is a direct connection between Western aid to Russia and the maintenance of stability in that country, Mr Attali said.

"We are interested in a situation when the current processes there evolve within the framework of the Constitution, the parliament passes laws and the government deals with matters concerning the administration of the country.

"But, with this end in view, the West should help Russia. We could assign funds to it to support its balance of payments, train personnel, give technical assistance, and grant loans to support small businesses which are very important for the creation of new job opportunities," Mr Attali said.

A meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin is to be held at the beginning of April and representatives of European countries are to meet in London at the end of that month to discuss aid to Russia, Mr Attali emphasised.

Thereby, April is a decisive month and, possibly, the deadline for the taking of specific decisions. If nothing is done in this respect during the month, the crisis in Russia is unlikely to be settled, the people would be driven to despair, and Russia may have a fate similar to that of the Soviet Union, Mr Attali pointed out.

"The West should work out a clear-cut platform which should be coordinated with the Russian Government. This is not an easy thing to do. We have got a whole package of ideas and we are already discussing them with the Russian authorities. I think we shall be able to complete the work within two months and begin to implement a programme for aid to Russia," he said.

Mr Attali's opinion is that Western countries may reach agreement to assign 6-7 billion dollars to Russia, which would make it possible to start the implementation of serious projects.

"This is not charity. It is in our interests to see to it that Russia stay peaceful, produce oil, export its commodities to Western states and be a market for our import merchandise. The provision of aid to it is a good investment of our capital," the EBRD president said.

Negotiations Conducted With Iran on Caspian Naval Force

NC2303175993 Baku TURAN in English 1347 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Baku, 23 March (TURAN)—Moscow and Tehran are conducting the negotiations concerning the distribution of Iran Navy on the Caspian Sea, reported the newspaper "ZERKALO".

According to the newspaper reviewer Russia agreed to sail some warships and submarines to Iran.

A year ago there was only a Caspian Navy of the USSR on this sea. After its division between Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in 1992 Baku had got all the material base and 30 per cent of warships. At that time the Russian Navy base on the Caspian sea was transferred to Astrakhan.

Azerbaijan is the most advantageous position nowadays having the most advantageous strategic position and naval bases. But if Iran gets the warships and submarines from Russia the situation may be changed. In such a case it will be necessary for Azerbaijan to create a security system of oil-fields on the Caspian sea. These oil-fields are supported to exploit together with the USA and Great Britain companies.

Negotiations With DPRK 'Positive' on Nuclear Issue

SK2303133093 Moscow Radio Moscow in Korean 1000 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Commentary from the "Focus on Asia" program]

[Text] It seems hard to use discretion. This is what station commentator Borikayev has concluded after analyzing recent reports on the crisis on the Korean peninsula caused by Pyongyang's decision to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Pyongyang's decision to withdraw from the treaty, which 153 countries of the world signed, has aroused serious public criticism in the world. It is dangerous in principle, and is an event that may result in a dangerous situation on the Korean peninsula because a peace treaty between the South and North has not yet been signed since the war ended in 1953.

The world's serious, imminent concern caused by the DPRK's decision cannot equivocate the fact that this crisis has taken place without reason. The ROK's annual military exercise always causes tension in South-North relations. It is no secret that the U.S. troops deployed on the Korean peninsula are amplifying North Korea's doubts through their participation in the military exercise.

Viewed in light of the fact that 35,000 U.S. soldiers were recruited as reinforcements for the recent military exercise, in which ultramodern U.S. Stealth F-117A and B1-B fighter bombers participated, it is understandable that North Koreans worry about the military exercise in spite of the ROK's statement saying it was conducted for defensive purposes.

In this very imminent situation, the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] sternly proposed that special inspections of the DPRK's nuclear facilities [haek sisol] be conducted. The situation became serious and this issue has been referred from the IAEA to the UN Security Council. It is regarded as nonnegotiable.

The United States, China, Russia, and other countries are now trying to settle this problem diplomatically. It seems that these countries' active efforts are bringing about the first positive results. Pyongyang, anyhow, has not yet given up negotiations. According to some reports, Pyongyang has implied that it may reconsider its decision under certain conditions.

I want to believe Pyongyang will reconsider its decision before formidable weapons are finally used to bomb North Korea's nuclear facilities. Some impatient people are suggesting that North Korea's nuclear facilities be bombed. I should like to say a word in conclusion. If the sides concerned had turned down the strict mutual demands, this crisis could have been avoided.

Foreign Minister Answers Phone-in Callers

PM2403165193 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 23 Mar 93 pp 2, 3

[Account of phone-in held in Moscow 20 March with Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, reported by KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA special correspondents A. Kaverznev, V. Shutkevich, Ya. Yuferova, and I. Yavlyanskiy: "Only One Party in the Foreign Ministry—the Party of Professionals"—first paragraph is introduction]

[Text] Today the Russian foreign minister meets the U.S. President, but yesterday, Saturday, he spoke to KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA readers.

[Caller] Hello, is that Moscow? This is Lyudmila Vasilyevna Otisheva from Kaliningrad here. I went on a trip to Poland, and I lost my documents and money. I went to the Russian consul. Admittedly he gave me a return document, but he actually demanded money from me—a fine. I walked to the border and had to spend the night with some tramps in a lavatory. Should the consul have helped me? What would you say, as the minister?

[Kozyrev] The consul gave you legal support, but unfortunately it is not possible for us to support a compatriot abroad in economic terms. There is practically not a single country in the world which grants economic support. Therefore my only advice is not to lose your money, either here or abroad. After all, at home, if you lose your purse, the militia will not give you money. At best it will protect you from robbers, but it is not in a position to help you in material terms either, and in the same way, consular workers have limited possibilities.

[Caller] Andrey Vladimirovich, this is Petrov from Moscow. Yeltsin is meeting with Clinton at the beginning of April. What can we expect from the two presidents' meeting? What aid might the West grant us?

[Kozyrev] Rather than aid, we are expecting a new phase in cooperation based on an agreement of principle on partnership. This includes cooperation on international issues, the elimination of seats of tension, and joint support of human rights—this relates first and foremost to our compatriots in the nearby foreign countries. Finally, economics. We need a deferment of payment on our debts and a possible stabilization fund to support the ruble, so that we can cope better with inflation.

[Caller] Now that I have managed to get through, can I ask you another question? I have repeatedly read in the newspapers that we used to have a "no" minister, but now we have a "yes" minister. Can you say anything about this?

[Kozyrev] This sort of thing belongs to the sphere of dramatic oversimplification. But in principle things that were always impossible for the old Soviet closed system have become possible for democratic Russia and for those who are not afraid of the world around them—what do we have to be afraid of? We are no worse than others, indeed our country is stronger than other countries, it is a great country.

But I would not hide the fact that there are problems, there are cases when I say "no" categorically. This concerns the actions of what is known as the party of war. In the neighboring countries as well as further afield there are extremist forces with whom compromise cannot be reached.

[Caller] Hello, Minister, I am an ordinary Soviet engineer, as we would have said in the past. Anyway, what do you think about the fact that some Foreign Ministry personnel, including ambassadors, are remaining in the countries where they work and changing their state service jobs for work in foreign companies?

[Kozyrev] Yes, there are cases of this, as you know. Of course, we gear our embassies to a system whereby employees return to Moscow and wind up their affairs once they have fully completed their diplomatic service... But on the other hand, after all, this is not a question of serfdom. There are people who have worked in the state service long enough and now want to try their hand at business somewhere else. I do not see anything wrong with that if no damage is done to professional and state interests and secrets. But there are cases when we present our staff with fairly strict requirements to come back home, report back, wind up their affairs, and obtain permission before transferring in a regular fashion to a different way of life, rather than behaving like the former Soviet ambassador to Chile. Unfortunately, this is a question of civilized behavior and, if it has to be learned, it is a difficult process.

[Caller] Andrey Vladimirovich, Foreign Ministry officials sometimes complain to the people about their very small earnings. Maybe this really is wrong, when businessmen earn huge sums of money in comparison with diplomats, who are in many respects responsible for the country's well-being?

[Kozyrev] Thank you very much for that question. In my opinion, what you have said is an axiom rather than a question. Of course Foreign Ministry employees should be paid more. But on the other hand, I must admit that officials in the state apparatus throughout the entire world earn less than those employed in business. There is an element of patriotism here. A Foreign Ministry employee works not only for money, although that too is important, but also for participation in the state's cause and in its interests—and this also brings a kind of satisfaction, although maybe not all of the wives would agree with this.

[Caller] Hello, this is Alekseyev from Krasnodar. We have more than one war going on in neighboring countries... Is there any hope that the states now taking shape on the territory of the former Yugoslavia will end the war and start living in a civilized way? The press writes that the Muslim factor is also mixed up in the conflict. All kinds of blocs are now forming in the places where East European countries used to be—the Vysegrad bloc, the Carpathian bloc, and so on. As I understand it, Russia is by and large opposed to blocs?

[Kozyrev] First of all, Yugoslavia. Yes, undoubtedly there is hope. There are even the first signs of it—the war in Slovenia has ended, although clashes are unfortunately continuing in Croatia. Hope exists if the Belgrade leadership, and of course, the Croatian leadership in Zagreb, accept as a reality the fact that the unified state has fallen apart and that republics have formed in its place—whether people like that or not, it is the only reality that should be recognized.

As for an alliance in the center of Europe—we have no such bloc mania. Anyway, these are not actually blocs—for instance, the Vysegrad "foursome"—they are mainly seeking economic cooperation. We believe that theoretically this process is normal. Everyone chooses someone close to them. It seems to me that there should be a calm reaction to this.

Incidentally, representatives of the Vysegrad four are planning to come to Moscow in the near future, and, as it happens, they are interested in restoring special relations with us. We will definitely receive them and see what they have brought with them.

[Caller] Hello. My name is Erin Khoysli, and I am a representative of the Swiss paper L'HEBDO. Speaking to Civic Union, President Yeltsin said that the CIS countries are now Russia's sphere of interest. Does this exclude assistance and influence from other countries, for example the UN "blue helmets" in Tajikistan and in Abkhazia?

[Kozyrev] Thank you for your question, but what the president meant was also confirmed in his address to the heads of CIS states, namely that we have a special interest there. But all the former Union republics have special interests, because we lived in the same country for a long time and we are indissolubly linked. However, Russia welcomes UN participation, and we are talking about the fact that our military are now shouldering an excessive burden in Tajikistan, for instance, and other hot spots. Why is no one sharing this burden with us? After all, you know that in the operations being carried out in Somali, for instance, or Iraq, where UN troops are deployed, the "blue helmets" are paying for everything, and this includes Russia, on the basis of a fixed scale of contributions. We are alone in bearing the expense for the operations which we are carrying out at the request of these states, or, for instance, on the basis of a CIS decision.

[Caller] Hello, Andrey Vladimirovich. This is Aleksandr Glebov. What is prepared in your kitchen, what songs do you sing, and with whom?

[Kozyrev] That is indeed an interesting question. It is usually my wife who cooks, and various people come to my house—my friends. Political comrades often pop in.

[Caller] Forgive me, but could you not give me the names of your closest circle of friends?

[Kozyrev] Well, there is certainly Filatov. Nikolay Vasilyevich Fedorov is my old friend. Sergey Shakhray... By and large it is a fairly large circle.

[Caller] Do you sing and play the guitar?

[Kozyrev] No, I have such a bad voice and such a bad ear for music that it would drive my friends away.

[Caller] Hello. Marina Vladimirovna Vorontsova here. I am a representative of the Moscow office of the German FOKUS magazine. My question is: The moratorium on nuclear testing runs out in July. Does Russia intend to extend this moratorium? Does it intend to extend it unilaterally and so try to influence the U.S. position? Will the recent North Korean statement to the effect that it will withdraw from the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons affect Russia's stance?

[Kozyrev] Marina Vladimirovna, we will not fight for this moratorium. Before anything happens in June or July, Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton will have had their meeting in Vancouver. The day after tomorrow I am going to the United States to prepare for that meeting, and we will raise this question there. Both the question of extending the moratorium, and the question of holding talks on a total and permanent ban on all these nuclear tests. France's position is helping us a great deal. President Mitterrand has just been here, and we also reached agreement with him to act together in this sphere. They are in favor of extending the moratorium. So that not everything is as bad is it may seem at first sight.

[Caller] What about North Korea?

[Kozyrev] North Korea —naturally that is a very alarming situation. Equally alarming is the very fact of violating or withdrawing from the nonproliferation regime.

We are reacting in a considered way, without getting hysterical, because this is serious politics. The situation really is pretty serious, and we will try to ensure that our North Korean neighbors review their decision.

[Caller] Andrey Bespalov from Tula here. Can I ask you a question about Yugoslavia?

[Kozyrev] By all means—a question from my namesake!

[Caller] All the warring sides in Yugoslavia have committed atrocities during combat operations there, but only Serbia is being punished. Do you consider this just?

[Kozyrev] Andrey, you are right, all sides have indeed committed atrocities, and all sides are indeed responsible for the bloodshed. But at the same time there is one side which bears a greater share of the responsibility, and it is without doubt the Belgrade leadership. It is not the Serbs, but the Belgrade leadership, the national-patriotic forces which pushed Belgrade into war. Cast your mind back to what happened in Slovenia, then Croatia. Now we are at the latest stage of this drama in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is for this reason that sanctions have been imposed against one side. Although there is no doubt that everybody is guilty.

You know, when the Croats organized bloodshed in Serbian Krajina, we were very firm in raising in the Security Council the question of applying sanctions against them. But here, of course, it is not a question of which one person is guilty: Here it is a matter of who bears the greater guilt and how to bring pressure to bear on the sides in order, nevertheless, to spur them on to peace.

[Caller] Viktor Tikhnyuk here, calling you from Minsk. Andrey Vladimirovich, does it not seem to you that some kind of dual standard exists in Moscow and on Smolensk Square in respect of the CIS republics and more distant foreign neighbors? You are often in Helsinki and New York, but rarely in Kiev or Minsk.

[Kozyrev] We do not acknowledge any dual standard. But there are peculiarities in our relations. I visited Minsk a month and a half ago... But these visits do not get so much attention because we often chat over the telephone, and that includes my Belarusian colleague Kravchanka. Everything gets swallowed up in our day-to-day, multi-faceted work, and at most the press devotes some attention to the president's contacts. If I speak with Christopher once a month, a report follows immediately. But I maintain daily contacts with CIS ministers, and the press stays silent.

[Caller] Just one more question, if I may: The letter from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn published in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA [10 March] mentions the likely prospect of forming some kind of alliance between Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. What does the Foreign Ministry think on this score?

[Kozyrev] I have enormous respect for the thoughts of Solzhenitsyn—he is a pillar of Russian culture, a man who meditates extensively on the fate of the motherland. But at the same time I would ask that a distinction be made between statements by even the most authoritative cultural activists and the official position. We cannot by any force of will or lack of will establish some kind of hierarchy between the republics. We proceed from the premise that there is a CIS—there are all the republics, and they are all equal, dear, and valuable to us, our compatriots everywhere. To establish some kind of official priority would mean pushing others away. Our task is to draw everybody together. Naturally we are aware that, for instance, Belarus itself is moving more toward cooperation with Russia, but that is another matter. Of course, we value and welcome it.

[Questioner] Thank you. Come and visit us in Minsk more often!

[Caller] Hello, Andrey Vladimirovich. I am Karina from St. Petersburg. Even though you are the foreign minister, I would like to ask a question about the domestic situation. How do you think the current rivalry between our president and parliament will be resolved, and is there any likelihood at all of the introduction of direct presidential rule?

[Kozyrev] I think that we should wait for Boris Nikolayevich's speech. Especially as there is very little time left to wait. ("Direct Line" was broadcast Saturday 20 March this year—Author). I can say one thing: The rivalry with the Supreme Soviet was prompted purely by the fact that the Supreme Soviet is for some reason assuming too great a burden, it is trying to guide the executive power, while at the same time there are dozens of draft laws which are in fact within the Supreme Soviet's competence, and we are still waiting for them. For instance, everybody in the Supreme Soviet is talking about defending the Russian-speaking population in nearby foreign countries. In actual fact, everything boils down to the need for one single amendment to our Russian Law on Citizenship which would allow people in nearby and distant foreign lands—like Solzhenitsyn himself, if he should so wish—to possess dual citizenship. You yourself understand how important it is for people in neighboring foreign lands to have Russian citizenship. This is the real question: Once you resolve it, our Dear Deputies, and adopt a law, it will be easier for us to work. And this includes the Foreign Ministry. It seems to me that there will be no conflict if parliament undertakes to deal with its own affairs, while we deal with ours under the president's leadership.

[Caller] Hello, I am 30 years old and I am a designer. As a politician you impress me, but I was, of course, very surprised when you committed a rather serious misdemeanor for a politician of your standing. In short, I am requesting your patronage in arranging for my wife to work abroad too. Only do not refuse me straight off.

[Kozyrev] The fact is that my wife, on my initiative by the way, has gotten involved in charity work. Apart from the basic work, she is involved in charity work to support children of servicemen being withdrawn from abroad, from neighboring and more distant countries, and from centers of conflict. After all, there is a huge number of children there who, like their parents, need to be catered for and helped. There are some very sick children who need urgent help. I am using international support and aid from funds in other countries. I therefore advise your wife to write to my wife and join the fund. It has both permanent and voluntary aid workers...

[Caller] This is a call from Samara. My name is Morgunov, I am unemployed, and an invalid (Category II). Russia is suffering losses valued at many billions, in particular from the halt in sales of military hardware to Iraq and other countries. Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry is requesting credits which will have to be repaid. How does all this hang together?

[Kozyrev] That is a very good question. Let us imagine a situation where we try to sell, as you say, military hardware to Iraq which has committed acts of aggression against contiguous states, in particular Kuwait, and is internationally isolated. Even if we refrain from supporting sanctions against Iraq, Western states are still not about to trade with that state, as an aggressor. This means that Iraq has not been receiving any "petrodollars" from them. Do you see the problem? For this reason it is impossible to sell anything to that country. All you can do is give. But that would entail wholesale losses. We would like Iraq to be a normal state and we would like to work with it. You know, our country does have an embassy there. Incidentally, it officially represents the interests of Great Britain there too.

Iraq is still following the path of aggression, and that is the reason—it is not our policy—that is the reason for the losses being suffered by us, and, incidentally, by France too, which also traded weapons, and Italy, and many other countries. Now on the subject of credits. First, we do not ask for credit—the need for it is determined by the government's economic section. I cannot say whether we need this much or that much credit. But the Foreign Ministry creates propitious political conditions for economic relations—that is, we are creating opportunities for obtaining credit if our economists deem this necessary.

[Caller] Hello, I am calling you from the Caucasus, and I had a job getting through. War has been going on in Nagorno-Karabakh now for several years. I would like

Russia's role in this conflict to be more significant. After all, Armenia and Azerbaijan are far closer than other, overseas states.

[Kozyrev] I am in full agreement with you. I must say that we do have an ambassador there—a guy named Kazemirov, ambassador at large: He is a highly experienced diplomat who has participated in settling several conflicts, notably in Angola. He spends time in Armenia, Stepanakert, and Baku, and he is constantly conducting so-called shuttle diplomacy—so it would be a mistake to think that we are not participating in trying to settle this conflict. We are involved on a daily basis in the most active manner. But unfortunately, we cannot stop the bloodshed for them.

[Caller] Hello, I am calling you from Saratov: Can you tell me how to get to see the FRG ambassador?

[Kozyrev] Every embassy has its own rules for receiving citizens. These rules are usually hanging up in the consular information departments.

[Caller] But what if I were to address you directly? Perhaps you can help in some way?

[Kozyrev] We cannot establish procedures for other embassies. Therefore it is better for you to appeal to the relevant parties directly.

[Caller] Andrey Vladimirovich, this is Semenov from Volgograd. My question is this: The czarist government leased Alaska to the United States for 99 years. The deadline has long since expired. Is our government thinking in terms of getting this territory back or not?

[Kozyrev] I think that right now it would be impractical to return this territory. The deadline has passed. We have far more pressing tasks—like how we are going to develop our own Siberia, for instance. Look, in Central Russia, around Moscow, peasant huts are still standing, rooted into the soil. And we are concerning ourselves with Alaska.

[Caller] Andrey Vladimirovich, the last question, according to tradition, comes from the "Direct Line" presenters. Russia recently registered its 26th party to date. Do you know which members of which parties are working in the Foreign Ministry and conducting Russia's policy?

[Kozyrev] I think that there is only one party—the party of professionals.

[Caller] Thank you, Andrey Vladimirovich, on behalf of the 4 million subscribers to KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA for finding the opportunity for this dialogue with our readers at such a difficult time.

Aftermath of Presidential Rule

Yeltsin, Khasbulatov, Chernomyrdin, Zorkin Meet

LD2403124693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1241 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow March 24 TASS—A meeting of the Russian president, parliament speaker, prime minister and chief constitutional justice began in the Kremlin on Wednesday [24 March].

Although the agenda was not officialy announced the meeting is sure to focus on the current political crisis which has aggravated after the presidential address to the nation and a sharp parliamentary reaction to it.

Meeting Ends 'Without Result'

LD2403141193 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1345 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow, 24 Mar—The meeting in the Kremlin today of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, and Constitutional Court Chairman Valeriy Zorkin has ended without result. As reported to the ITAR-TASS correspondent by Anatoliy Krasikov, head of the president's press service, "the sides kept to their positions." He also reported that an official report of the president's press secretary will soon be circulated.

Yeltsin 'Ready To Withdraw' Presidential Rule

LD2303165893 Berlin ADN in German 1624 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Moscow (ADN)—President Boris Yeltsin is apparently ready to withdraw the measures he announced setting up extraordinary administration. This was heard by ADN in Moscow on Wednesday [as received] from well-informed sources close to the Russian head of state. The Presidential Council, currently in session, is to alter Yeltsin's decree to this effect, it was said. The document is to be published during the course of the evening, it was added.

Yeltsin does on the other hand want to retain the plebicite on his holding office scheduled for 25 April, it was said. Yeltsin decided upon this step to avoid infringements of the Constitution, it was added. [passage omitted]

Amendments Reportedly Made to Decree

LD2303165093 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1600 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The Russian president's basic decree, which was mentioned in Boris Yeltsin's address to the country's citizens, has now been released and has already been registered. Sergey Filatov, the president's head of administration, announced this today while opening a sitting of the Presidential Council in the Kremlin. The sitting was convened to discuss what actions to take following the Constitutional Court ruling.

An RIA correspondent has learned from a member of the Presidential Council that amendments have been made to the text of Yeltsin's basic decree. This Presidential Council member is of the view that this tidied-up text of the document will enable many of the president's opponents to review their position in regard to his actions and decisions over the last few days.

'Text' of Yeltsin 20 Mar Decree Published

LD2403105493 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1015 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, 24 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—The press service of the president of the Russian Federation today circulated the text of Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin's Decree of 20 March.

"On the activities of executive bodies until the power crisis is overcome":

"Confirming the oath of the president of the Russian Federation that I took on 10 July 1991;

Maintaining loyalty to my pledge to carry out conscientiously the responsibilities placed upon me by the people;

Proceeding from the fact that the institution of president of the republic has been introduced in accordance with a direct expression of will on the part of the people of the Russian Federation;

Noting that the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Federation failed to adopt decisions aimed at improving the system of state authority of the Russian Federation, which is based on the principles of division of legislative, executive, and judicial powers, as a result of which the crisis in the economy and in power structures has been exacerbated;

Taking into account the acute nature of the political confrontation within society and the intensification of separatism, nationalism, and crime, I consider it necessary to adopt a number of measures aimed at stabilizing the situation and creating conditions for the effective conduct of reforms, and I decree:

1. A vote on confidence in the president of the Russian Federation is to be held on 25 April 1993.

Simultaneously with the confidence vote in the president of the Russian Federation, to hold a ballot on the draft of the new Constitution of the Russian Federation and the draft law on elections to the federal parliament.

To establish that the organization of the voting and the determination of its results are effected in conformity with the rules established by the law of the Russian Federation "On the election of the president of the Russian Federation".

2. In keeping with the Constitution of the Russian Federation that is in force, the president of the Russian Federation:

Takes all necessary steps to defend the constitutional structure of the Russian Federation based on the principles of democracy, federalism, the republican form of government, and the separation of powers;

Ensures political stability in society;

Defends the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and its national and state structure;

Takes measures to maintain interethnic accord and to implement the Federation Treaty as a component part of the current and new Constitutions of the Russian Federation;

Guarantees observance of the constitutional rights and freedoms of Russian Federation citizens;

Takes the necessary measures to ensure the security of Russian Federation citizens;

Guarantees the right of all political parties, public organizations, and mass movements to operate, except for those that seek forcibly to change the constitutional system, to violate the integrity of the Russian Federation, to undermine the security of the state, to create unlawful armed formations, and to inflame social, ethnic, and religious discord.

Creates the necessary conditions for the normal operation of the courts and prosecution service;

Defends the freedom of the media and the right of citizens to obtain objective information while staving off propaganda, and appeals forcibly to change the constitutional system, to undermine the security of the state, and to inflame social, ethnic, and religious discord.

3. Decisions by state bodies and officials aimed at suspending decrees and instructions of the president of the Russian Federation in the absence a ruling from the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation are to be deemed legally invalid and not subject to implementation, in accordance with accepted procedure.

4. The Council of Ministers—the Government of the Russian Federation—is to carry out effective management of the country's economy and to ensure its stable functioning.

Within five days it is to present a list of priority economic measures envisaging:

A simple and comprehensible system of allocating land plots to individuals, including an organizational and legal procedure for registering property rights and mortgaging land plots;

Ensuring the rights of individuals in the process of privatization, as well as organizational and legal procedures for registering ownership of real estate and organizational, legal, and material support for enterprise;

Keeping unemployment down by creating new jobs through the implementation of federal, regional, and local development programs;

Restricting the issue of money, keeping it under strict control, and stabilizing the ruble exchange rate.

The Council of Ministers and the government of the Russian Federation are to pay particular attention so that all the economic measures which are taken are in strict accordance with the Federation Treaty.

5. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation is to step up the maintenance of public order.

The Ministry of Security of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation are to cooperate with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation in combating crime.

6. The Ministry of the Press and Information of the Russian Federation is to make use of the measures laid down in the Law of the Russian Federation "On the Mass Media" to stop the dissemination of calls to change the constitutional system by force, violations of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, the undermining of the security of the state, and the kindling of social, national, and religious strife.

7. The heads of executive authority on the territories of subjects of the Russian Federation, and the territorial structures of federal bodies of executive authority are to ensure measures to implement this decree.

8. The Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation is to inform other states, including the general secretary of the United Nations, that the measures established by this decree do not constitute a state of emergency [rezhim chrezvychaynogo polozheniya], and the right to withdraw from the obligations under the international pact on civilian and political rights is not being exercised.

9. This decree comes into force from the moment of its publication."

Moscow, the Kremlin, 24 March 1993

Zorkin Discusses Constitutional Court Role

PM2403105593 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 24 Mar 93 p 1

[Interview with Valeriy Zorkin, chairman of the Russian Federation Constitutional Court, by A. Afanasyev in Moscow; date not given: "Valeriy Zorkin: I Remain a Judge Rather than a Politician"]

[Text] [Afanasyev] Valeriy Dmitriyevich, the charge leveled against you is that the chairman of the Constitutional Court has somehow changed imperceptibly from an arbiter into a participant in the political conflict. Moreover, it is claimed that, willingly or not, you have adopted the position of the conservative Supreme Soviet.

[Zorkin] I am convinced that we still remain arbiters rather than politicians. However, the situation has changed drastically. Whereas in December the sides were in a state of equilibrium and observed the rules of the Constitution, now, to great regret, the president's team has prompted him to step outside the constitutional area. I am far from idealizing the Congress—the destructive trends there also need to be overcome. However, look for yourself: On 20 March the president spoke not about his intentions, but about his decision. Should the court have played a waiting game? And should we not then have found ourselves in a situation where neither organ could influence the unpredictable progress of events? I consider that we were bound to intervene and discharge our constitutional duty. Imagine my situation. On Saturday morning I received information that the president's edict either had been signed or soon would be. I called the president throughout the day. And eventually I realized that it was no accident that I was not being put through to him. What was to be done? We all still remember Foros. Hence the logic of events. It was not my personal decision, but the decision of the court as a whole.

[Afanasyev] According to the latest information, Khasbulatov thinks that the president's impeachment is inevitable. And in that case his place is automatically taken by the vice president. It is being assumed that the Constitutional Court is being used for such an outcome....

[Zorkin] You will appreciate that there are various possible scenarios—that's the way life is—and these are the latest interpretations. I have tirelessly said here, and recently repeated it in the United States, that for me Boris Nikolayevich is not simply a man. He is the embodiment of reform. But the general imperative for everyone is to sit down at the negotiating table—without ultimatums. As far as the interpretations are concerned, let them rest on the conscience of the actual interpreters.

[Afanasyev] Recently a journalist in discussion with someone from the "president's immediate entourage" suggested perfectly seriously that you yourself are eager to become president and that, when you get your way, you will immediately "ax" your own comrades-in-arms. Be frank, does all this enter into your plans?

[Zorkin] You can, of course, smile here. But if you take it seriously... it is about ambition. Regarding my work, you will have been able to see for yourself that I have not stepped outside the constitutional area; I constantly defend it. And let the journalist's mind be calm—so long as the Constitutional Court is in business the shadow of Stalin will never loom over him. Although these are common fears in our country. And they can only be overcome by fostering a parliament and government of professionals and developing a powerful, rule-of-law, unifying president. And today all should see to it that Boris Nikolayevich, with his potential, becomes a Russian Roosevelt or de Gaulle. But they, if you remember, were strong presidents while remaining within the framework of the Constitution.

[Afanasyev] The president's press secretary has stated that impeachment is impossible. Khasbulatov, on the contrary, believes that the Constitutional Court ruling itself paves the way to impeachment. The Constitutional Court conclusion says nothing about impeachment. That is, it still retains the final word! So, are you for or against impeachment?

[Zorkin] If you look at our conclusion, you will note that we are by no means calling for a resignation. It is up to the Congress to make that decision. But much does indeed depend on how the Congress and the president view the situation. Ideally, they should move toward each other. Yes, probably some figures in the Congress are prepared to try to get the president impeached. But they do not yet represent the entire Congress. The deputies still have an opportunity.

[Afanasyev] Valeriy Dmitriyevich, what if a two-thirds majority is nonetheless obtained?

[Zorkin] Then, legally, that could be the end of the road. But, once again, much depends on the president. That is, in order to have prevented this the president would have had to have started taking steps yesterday. Although we should all bear in mind that the fate of Russia is being decided along with the fate of the president. While not overestimating the standing of an individual, it should not be underestimated either. A statesman has no right to slam the door shut. That applies to both sides.

[Afanasyev] Valeriy Dmitriyevich, I telephoned you in court and at home after the session ended and was for a long time unable to reach you at either end....

[Zorkin] Yes, after the session I attended the funeral of Boris Nikolayevich's mother. I realize that he is clearly annoyed with me at the moment. But then I saw the president's suffering face and I thought and felt that not everything has been lost for us and for Russia. But that was a personal moment, forgive me.

[Afanasyev] Responses to the president's address and the events around it are now streaming in. The democratic public, including the international public, supports the president's resolute step.

[Zorkin] It is a shame that other voices—those of Federation components—so far remain unheeded. Quite different news is coming in from Karelia, Yakutia, and Mordovia. And that is understandable. After all, the address applied not only to federal organs but also to the rights of Federation components, including the republics, to assert their own executive authority themselves. This is a painful process at the very least. And in the worst-case scenario could trigger an explosion.

[Afanasyev] So how do you view the immediate future?

[Zorkin] There are different options open to the president and the Congress. Life itself makes any statesman gravitate to the center ground. He must seek social support. What prevents this? Labels? And I wonder if this crisis would have happened if the president had maneuvered. Yes, he is a major statesman. But would he have been hindered by having an agreement—and I don't mean a spineless compromise? [No pomeshal by yemu ne beskhrebetnyy kompromiss, a soglasiye?] I think not. [Zorkin ends]

Extracts from Constitutional Court Conclusion

"The president has announced that he has made a decision—specifically, that he has signed an edict on special rule until the crisis of power is overcome. The Russian Federation Constitution and legislation do not provide for the possibility of special rule being introduced....

"In his address the president announced his decision to schedule a vote of confidence in the Russian Federation president and vice president for 25 April 1993. The vote desired by the president may be scheduled. But the tendering of a vote of confidence in the president should not mean the removal of other organs of state power."

Constitutional Court Judge Explains Court's Ruling

OW2403110793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1055 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Commenting on the resolution of the Constitutional Court at our request, member of the Constitutional Court Vladimir Oleynik said that the Constitutional Court made use of contradictions between articles 121-10 and 165-1 of the Constitution. According to the article dealing with the Constitutional Court, the Court shall make conclusions on the presence of reasons sufficient for removing a federal official from his post. However, the article which deals with the removal of the federal president from his post (121-10) does not specify whether the resolution of the Constitutional Court must contain such words.

With reference to articles 74 and 79 of the Law on the Constitutional Court, Oleynik said that "it is not the Constitutional Court's job to decide whether the president's actions are reason enough for his impeachment." "The Constitutional Court has made it clear which provisions in the president's appeal are constitutional and which ones are not," he continued. "As to the decision on whether the president's appeal had enough anti- constitutional provisions for his impeachment, this must be taken by the Congress of People's Deputies," he added.

He also pointed out that in accordance with Article 74 of the Law on the Constitutional Court, the anticonstitutional nature of moves, taken by an official, "may serve as the reason for his removal from office or for resorting to some other sanction against him". So, the "resolution of the Constitutional Court implies a different mechanism—a reprimand or warning, not necessarily impeachment".

Vladimir Oleinik was one of the nine judges, who voted for the adoption of the resolution of the Constitutional Court. Three judges voted against it.

Constitutional Judge Urges Review of Congress Decree

MK2303145693 Moscow KURANTY in Russian 23 Mar 93 p 5

[Report on interview with Ernest Ametistov, Constitutional Court judge, by Konstantin Katanyan on 22 March in Moscow: "Why Speak About Something That Does Not Exist?"]

[Text] On 22 March the Constitutional Court chaired by V. Zorkin reviewed the case "On checking the constitutionality of actions by the supreme official of the Russian Federation." The court started reviewing this matter on its own initiative after it judged B. Yeltsin's televised address as an attempt to spurn the basic, fundamental principles of the Constitution, particularly the principle of the division of powers. At the request of KURANTY, Constitutional Court Judge Ernest Ametistov commented on the situation that had emerged in the courtroom.

"The president's actions in the form of his address to the citizens of Russia are being reviewed by the Constitutional Court according to Article 74 of the Law on the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation. I was against issuing an opinion on the constitutionality of the president's actions because under part 3 of that same Article 74, the Constitutional Court is forbidden to give its opinion on matters which may be a subject of consideration in its session should a case of the constitutionality of any normative act or of the custom of law-application practice be reviewed. It is quite evident that we may receive a petition from the people's deputies requesting us to examine the presidential edict as to its constitutionality. Whereas we, while reviewing the case of whether the president's actions were constitutional, are probing into the contents of the draft edict. The court still does not have the text of the edict itself.

I also believe that the court should initially review a petition by a group of deputies on checking the constitutionality of the decree by the Eighth Congress and only then go over to the situation that emerged as a direct consequence of what happened at the congress. Or these two questions should be reviewed at least as a package.

Court Passed Decision Before Decrees Were Published

LD2303165493 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 23 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] An interesting situation has arisen. President Yeltsin's supporters could raise the question that the Constitutional Court has passed its decision before the official presidential decrees were published.

Court Chairman Zorkin has already been reproached for calling Yeltsin's actions an attempted coup, long before the court's decision. Zorkin's critics now recall the article of the law—I quote—saying that the powers of a judge of the Constitutional Court are suspended if he explains his opinion before the court has passed a decision.

Fedotov Questions Legality of Court's Actions

LD2303135693 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1311 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Tamara Ivanova]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Mar—The actions of the Constitutional Court in the last few days do not withstand legal analysis, Press and Information Minister Mikhail Fedotov said today in an interview with an ITAR-TASS correspondent.

In principle, the Russian president's action can be examined by the Constitutional Court, said Mikhail Fedotov, but only if this action has a legal and not a political significance. The law on the Constitutional Court forbids it from examining political questions, said the minister. Therefore no decision can be made in this case.

He also said that a ruling on whether the actions of any official are constitutional must be reached in an open session of the court, and that according to the law, all parties to the case must be invited to attend and be given at least 10 days' notice to do so. Not only that, but the right of an official to name a representative to the Constitutional Court has been violated. Mikhail Fedotov concluded that all rulings issued by the Constitutional Court in breach of the law have no force in law.

Mikhail Fedotov also said that he not only wholeheartedly supports the presidential decree on upholding the freedom of the press but was one of its authors. He believes that the decree will remain in force until "we overcome the current conflicts, which are directly linked to attempts to monopolize the media." As an example of this, he cited the draft law on state radio and television broadcasting that was submitted to the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies. Mikhail Fedotov believes that for this law to be adopted "we will first have to amend the Constitution and several laws, among them the Law on the Mass Media."

The press and information minister also declared that he is absolutely convinced of the right of the president to go to the public that elected him to find out whether he still enjoys their trust as president or not.

Calls Court's Decision 'Illegal'

OW2303200193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1947 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian Information and Press Minister Mikhail Fedotov believes the Constitutional Court's decision to the effect that President Boris Yeltsin has violated the Constitution is illegal, and hence invalid. Addressing a news conference in Moscow on Tuesday, Fedotov said, "The chairman of the Constitutional Court, Valeriy Zorkin, can't wait to get rid of the President. He realizes that this has to be done quickly and is in a hurry." The minister said that, if the President resigned of his own free will, the present government might follow suit. "But the legality of his impeachment would be more than dubious," so, if he were impeached, the government would remain in office, supporting the President and "simply refusing to recognize the illegal decisions," he said.

Fedotov thinks one rather than two questions will be put to the vote at the forthcoming referendum—confidence in the President." If the people say yes, this would automatically mean the adoption of the [new] Constitution," he said.

Commenting on Yeltsin's decree on the mass media, the minister said that, by issuing it, the President had ensured his protection of the media rather than bringing them under his control. The media would be subsidized until they solved their financial problems. "Giving them no financial support now would mean putting them out of existence," he said.

Calls Yeltsin Only 'Guarantor' of Reforms

LD2303230893 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2000 GMT 23 Mar 93

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] Russian Vice Premier Boris Fedorov reported at a news conference that the majority of government members have supported the president's stand and, according to the vice premier, only Yeltsin can be a guarantor of the continuation of democratic reforms. He also reported that the taxation inspection and customs services have been instructed to strengthen control over economic activities so that, in case of a power crisis, there is no loss of revenue or increase in the illegal export of goods and raw materials.

Fedotov, Kovalev, Ametistov on Court Decision

LD2403005493 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report by correspondent Vladimir Perfilyev; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] A news conference on the results of today's session of the Constitutional Court is continuing at this moment in the Ministry of Press and Information of the Russian Federation, in which Mikhail Fedotov, the minister of press and information; Sergey Kovalev, chairman of the parliamentary committee for human rights; and Ernest Ametistov, a member of the Constitutional Court, are taking part.

[Begin recording] [Fedotov] It seems to me that what is happening in the Constitutional Court today has already gone beyond the bounds of elementary observance of the law of the Constitutional Court. And the decision that was handed down was made with the crudest violation of the law. I personally consider that 25 articles of the law of the Constitutional Court were violated, and there are not so many of them. If you say who was the first to violate this rule—and that is the rule not to make pronouncements before the decision on the case is reached—then that person was Valeriy Dmitriyevich Zorkin.

[Kovalev] I will not repeat what Mikhail Aleksandrovich said, with which I agree absolutely. The Constitutional Court has violated everything that could be violated in this case. But suffice to point out one trick that was no quite clever enough: the Constitutional Court examined this problem without having the text of Boris Nikolayevich's decree.

[Ametistov] There are a whole number of other violations of the law of the Constitutional Court. All this has led me to the conclusion that the number of these violations, and the serious nature of them, puts in very serious doubt the juridical correctness of this decision. [end recording]

Constitutional Court Criticizes INTERFAX Report

LD2403115593 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1041 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS]

[Text] Moscow, 24 Mar—The press service of the Russian Federation Constitutional Court issued a statement today in connection with the information reported by INTERFAX on 23 March to the effect that the text of the Constitutional Court decision of 23 March had been given to Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin personally, during the funeral of the president's mother, Klavdiya Yeltsin. It states:

A decision of the Constitutional Court is an official document and is transmitted (even to the president's administration) by the Constitutional Court office in accordance with set procedures. It cannot be delivered in person as a private message.

The press service of the Constitutional Court thinks that political gambling on the personal tragedy of the president—coming from the president's entourage, which supplied INTERFAX with the aforementioned disinformation—is immoral and unacceptable in a civilized society.

Rutskoy's Adviser Discusses Yeltsin Impeachment

LD2403113193 London ITV Television Network in English 1900 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Interview with Andrey Fedorov, Russian Vice President Rutskoy's adviser, in Moscow by announcer Zeinab Badawi in London; from the "Channel 4 News" program—live]

[Text] [Badawi] Mr. Fedorov, yesterday the mood in Moscow was all in favor of impeachment. Do you have any reservations now?

[Fedorov] The situation is the following, that tomorrow morning the Supreme Soviet should decide when it will convene the congress, and there is a proposal from a number of the MP's to include the issue of impeachment. But, at the same time, in the corridors there are doubts that it's possible to gain a two-thirds majority needed for impeachment.

[Badawi] But are you, yourself, and Vice President Rutskoy—to whom you're very close—are you both in favor of impeaching President Yeltsin?

[Fedorov] The situation is the following, that the vice president is standing on the position that it is much better and much reasonable for the country to avoid this steps like impeachment, because we are now already in the situation when the country's splitting and the impeachment could only split the country. Furthermore, we don't have the time to risk.

[Badawi] But what do you make, then, of the speaker of the Russian parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov, saying that he wants to proceed with trying to impeach President Yeltsin, even though the Constitutional Court has said there is no grounds for this?

[Fedorov] The problem is the following, that Mr. Khasbulatov has a strong influence on the republics and regions within the Russia, and many of its leaders are the members of the CIS, of our Congress of People's Deputies, and he thinks that he can try to push this impeachment procedure.

[Badawi] Do you think he's going to succeed?

[Fedorov] It's 50:50. It depends on the whole situation at the congress, and it depends on the, on whether the text of Mr. Yeltsin's decrees will appear till the congress.

[Badawi] Who are you going to back if it does get to the congress? Are you going to vote for impeachment? Is Aleksandr Rutskoy going to go down that line?

[Fedorov] I think, I hope so, that if it will happen, that the congress will be convened, we can find another way out other than impeachment. One other possible solution which was discussed today in the corridors of the parliament was a compromise based on the early elections both for president and the parliament.

[Badawi] Are you now saying that Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy is in no hurry to try to impeach President Yeltsin and, in fact, he would rather see him stay in power under some sort of new compromise?

[Fedorov] The situation is the following, that the vice president will stay with the president according to the Constitution. And he supported, by the way, Mr. Yeltsin for this possible voting on confidence on 25 April.

[Badawi] Do you think all these actions are coming rather late in the day and that President Yeltsin would have been much better off if he had tried to reform Russia's institutions, political institutions, soon after the coup, when his currency with the Russian people was very high?

[Fedorov] My personal position is that we really lost time because all the necessary measures concerning the changes in the legislative system, etc. should be made not later than October 1991. That's one of the main sources why we are in the crisis.

[Badawi] Just very briefly, Mr. Fedorov, if President Yeltsin were impeached—even though he says he won't accept that—and the congress appoints Vice President Rutskoy president, is it possible that Russia would have two presidents. Could that happen?

[Fedorov] First of all, I hope that there will be no impeachment. But, anyway, the vice president said that he will act according to the Constitution. And, of course, at the same time we will not allow to have two presidents in the country because it can cause a very deep crisis.

[Badawi] Andrey Fedorov, thank you very much.

Presidential Council Discusses Current Situation

LD2303220693 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1900 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The situation in the country is complicated and demands an appropriate, calm, and balanced reaction, it was noted at the session of the Presidential Council which took place in the Kremlin today. This was reported to a RIA correspondent by Anatoliy Krasikov, head of the press service of the Russian Federation president.

During the session, which lasted more than three hours and was chaired by Sergey Filatov, head of the administration of the Russian Federation president, a lot of time was spent on discussion of the conclusions of the Constitutional Court in connection with the address of Boris Yeltsin to the citizens of Russia on 20 March.

According to Krasikov, owing to family circumstances, Boris Yeltsin could not occupy himself with an assessment of that document and charged the members of the Presidential Council with doing it. The session noted that in assessing the conclusions of the Constitutional Court, one has to proceed from the fact that the president of Russia was elected by the entire people and is the highest official in the state.

Taking into account the contradictions present in the constitution of the Russian Federation, some members of the Presidential Council think it is necessary that the president should act as a guarantor of the first and third articles in the constitution.

During the session, the view was expressed that it would be logical and correct if Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy, who does not agree with the president, should first announce his resignation and then air his particular opinion which is at variance with his position. Nevertheless, the point of view was heard that Rutskoy is completely capable of working in one team with the president and of giving him support.

According to Krasikov, the main decree ensuing from the address to the citizens of Russia will be published in the very near future, most likely on 24 March.

Supreme Soviet Continues To Meet on Yeltsin Decree

Khasbulatov News Conference 23 Mar

LD2303220093 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2030 GMT 23 Mar 93

[News conference given by Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov in Moscow on 23 March—recorded]

[Text] I would like to remind you of some of my opinions which I expressed when I opened the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, and in particular I want to recall the idea which I described as follows. I said at that time that one gets the impression that those people who are carrying out radical reforms on behalf of the people, one gets the impression that they have exhausted the opportunities, or they believe that they have exhausted the opportunities to carry out reforms by peaceful democratic means. Therefore we see increasing desire to carry out all these so-called reforms by strong-arm methods. Unfortunately this phrase has not been elaborated by the mass media, neither in Russia nor in the world press.

What we are faced with today is a specific fact, a direct attempt to stage a coup d'etat and to carry out further moves in society by way of executive decrees, which is obviously in contravention of the existing legislation, and first of all of the Constitution.

Naturally, a whole package of relevant decrees has also been prepared, envisaging the use of harsh measures, coercive measures. And it is only the passivity, which I think is incomprehensible to the organizers of this putsch, and, in the majority of cases, direct opposition to these developments, that in effect forced them to abandon such direct and violent actions. Nevertheless, those cowardly attempts to explain now that these decrees are no decrees at all, that they stay within the framework of the Constitution, these attempts can in no way devalue and depreciate official actions on the part of the highest official in the state. All the more so because, as you know, since the end of the Eighth Congress society has constantly been kept in suspense, with officials constantly issuing statements to the effect that a very serious address, some very serious measures, are to follow shortly, and so on and so forth, day in day out. It goes without saying that such an address is significant on its own, regardless of any decrees, instruction, and so on.

Therefore it is only natural that the Constitutional Court—and we have already received its rulings, just a couple of hours ago—it is only natural that the Constitutional Court should qualify this address as a separate action on its own, which contravenes up to a dozen articles of our Constitution.

All this is a singularly dangerous opposition in society [as heard], since it puts in doubt the legitimacy of powers, which has been dubious even without this. This applies both to presidential power, and to the body of deputies as well. I am now reminded of the concluding remarks I made at the recent Eighth Congress. I said then something to the effect that regardless of whether the president wished or not to face reelection shortly, to call an election, and regardless of whether the deputies want it or not, we shall no doubt reach the point when both the president and the deputies will have to face reelection.

So now, in conditions...[changes thought] No matter how the Congress ends, whatever decision is made, it is clear that the president will never again be the president he used to be and that the executive power, headed by the president, will never again be the kind of power that is suitable for the Russian Federation, the kind of power that should have ruled in the Russian Federation. That is why reelections have, of course, already become topical, irrespective of what kind of decision the Congress will make. That, it seems to me, is an extremely important circumstance.

Now for the third factor that I wanted to bring to your attention. Esteemed colleagues, it is your right—and I, frankly, no less than the president, have an interest in freedom of the mass media, although I do not issue any decrees, apart from one law, you remember, on the media, which was prepared by the Supreme Soviet and which I championed. It does, in fact, contain the most democratic articles, and we have no intention of modifying that provision, although there is a certain assignment, and we shall, of course, carry it out, to put in good order the work, primarily, of television, radio, and so on. But that is a different area.

So, however you cover events, I want to remind you once again that the basis—and here the president is right—the basis of the conflict between the legislators and the executive does, of course, bear no personal imprint at all. That can only be said by people who are not at all far-sighted. The basis is that, in practice, the dictatorial powers in the management of the national economy, in the exercise of domestic and foreign policy, in the establishment of some order in the fight against crime, in the implementation of the most radical measures on the road toward a market economy—all this is bankrupt. It has suffered total bankruptcy.

Why? You will recall when for the first time I began to demand, literally, at the Supreme Soviet, to demand that all these radical reforms of ours should be amended. You will recall that this was the end of January and beginning of February 1992. I then said we would come to suffer mass poverty, that we, reformers, will undermine the trust our population and the voters at large have in us. Let us introduce some alterations, and we did propose certain alterations. They certainly did not imply a return to some sort of totalitarian system and so on. They presupposed, instead, sensible solutions which are typical of a mixed economy, a market economy, the kind of economy that is life-giving, resulting in prosperity for societies in democratic countries.

Where and, indeed, when, have I personally called, for instance, for the restoration of the communist dictatorship and so on and so forth? After all, that is nonsense. And so, this course has become bankrupt. And now our opponents, the opponents of democracy, supporters of dictatorship, are trying to hijack public opinion, creating artificial conflicts. And I am absolutely certain that until we resolve this issue in a lawful and constitutional way, society will all the time be dragged into senseless, distracting maneuvers.

That is why, of course, the Congress should radically tackle this whole problem, a problem, indeed, of the conformity of these actions, specific actions, reflected in the president's address, their constitutionality. We have the verdict of the Constitutional Court and, consequently, the Congress should arrive at its own conclusion and all legitimate powers must subordinate themselves to this decision if they wish to be in agreement with the Constitution and the laws of the Russian Federation.

[Unidentified correspondent] In your view, does the Constitutional Court's decision give grounds for starting the impeachment procedure at the Congress? If so, will not this lead to a sharp split in the country?

[Khasbultov] You know, I do of course fear that there could be various advocates, especially for our country, who are only just setting out on the path of democratic change, who should be thinking, first and foremost, more about democratic institutions than about support for certain individuals, and about the fact that we have indeed embarked on a path of democratic change and have consolidated state democratic institutions. That is what they should be more concerned about, and only then be creating a civic society.

I agree with the serious anxiety you express in your question and I share it. But clearly there is every reason to bring a case of impeachment. That is clear, and that is precisely why Congress should be convened because the findings of the Constitutional Court are there.

[Unidentified correspondent] There was a statement in MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS yesterday that Zorkin is now the former chairman of the Constitutional Court. Will statements of that kind be examined somewhere in the Supreme Soviet, and isn't that also a violation of the Constitution?

[Khasbulatov] Well, of course, it is a violation of the Constitution, but these are being made too often. You know, we come across them; unfortunately, they are made, and I fully reject such attempts. Insulting statements are being made to the president. That sort of thing should not be done, it is not necessary. I do not understand why our press does this sort of thing. Insulting remarks are being made about the chairman of the Constitutional Court who, incidentally, is respected in democratic countries more than presidents and parliaments are, incidentally.

But I do not want to talk about insulting remarks in relation to the chairman of the Supreme Soviet. You can be the judge of that. In my opinion I am probably the most popular person in this respect who gets the most choice words thrown at him.

[Unidentified correspondent] Why are you not taking measures to protect your own honor and dignity? After all, by defaming you they are defaming representative legislative power in the country. This reminds one of the story of Rasputin: By defaming him, they defamed the House of the Tsars and tsarist legitimate power. [Voice from hall declares: That's a good story!; laughter and applause]

[Khasbulatov] Fine, that is true. But, you know, there is something wrong with our democracy if the chairman of the Supreme Court, the chairman of the Constitutional Court, and the chairman of parliament, and the President have to defend themselves.

It seems to me that it is society which should protect these people. If we are to have a real civilian society, if we are all to avoid the onset of a dictatorship—no matter in what form this onset is implemented—then evidently we shall come to a position in which the top officials will be protected by society from insult. But how can I now protect myself? For now I am not in a position to do this.

[Unidentified correspondent] it is known that there has been a proposal for a referendum on confidence in the president in which the electorate can vote either for or against. But what if they are dissatisfied with their deputies or with the speaker or with the whole Congress or parliament, how can they express their opinion, naturally apart from applying proletarian principles?

[Khasbulatov] You see, this is, of course, aimed at the broad public. You are sophisticated people. You understand very well that this is simply a trick, saying do you trust me or not. We trusted you, your humble services were some of those which very clearly and strongly ensured the victory of our respected president. Therefore, it is necessary to ask the question in specific terms since the president and our deputies were elected in conditions in which this was one of the Union republics and not an independent state. That is the first thing.

The second thing is that both the one and the others were elected in conditions in which, as many representatives of our mass media correctly say—both Russian and foreign media—both the one and the others, I repeat, I would remind you, in conditions that in 1990 and in the first half of 1991 were of the same type. The Communist Party of the USSR was still in existence with all of its structures, rayon committees, town committees, and so on and so forth. And, consequently, people are now calling into doubt the legitimacy of the deputies and the president. They are saying this: At that time we hoped that you, esteemed deputies, and you, esteemed president, if you make mistakes there is Union power and we considered that, there, at the level of Union power your mistakes could be put right if you commit any. Therefore, Russia is now a huge, mighty, independent power. Be so kind as to lay down your powers and come to the ballot box. And let us leave all kinds of do you have confidence in me or not games for the amusement of your families. I think that we have to have respect for the logic of our ordinary Russian voter.

[Unidentified correspondent] This president did go to Russia, [words indistinct]

[Khasbulatov] Excuse me, he did not go. I have convinced the president many times that he did not go and at the present time he is not going. And what does it mean firstly—(?confidence) in the president and vice president? The vice president asserts: I do not play those games, I need the election law, I am prepared to have elections in keeping with the law. What kind of confidence is this? Who should check it? How can one implement that? Excuse me! And then there is 25 April. Will an administrator stand at the ballot box? You take a look at the whole of the chain of logic. How can one carry that out from a technical and organizational point of view. These are purely party tricks which you will recall were played out in distant times with experienced people. They are being played out at the present time, all the more so since I am often reproached with the fact that I allegedly have several party workers here. Excuse me, but the administration includes a whole department of the former central committee, whole sections with their technical secretaries and so forth. Perhaps that is right. I am not condemning that. I am talking about how you sometimes criticize, saying that I have some kind of party worker, and so forth. But there the entire apparatus of the CPSU Central Committee is operating, only it is larger in number, because in the Kremlin previously there were both the government and the Supreme Soviet and the president. There was enough room for everyone. And now there is not enough room. And then they governed the whole Union. And now there is not enough room for the governing of Russia on its own.

[Unidentified correspondent] I would like to learn precisely how long it will take for elections of people's deputies to be held. Will impeachment precede this?

[Khasbulatov] You see, I cannot predetermine the decisions of either the Supreme Soviet or of the Congress to an even greater extent. But if impeachment is carried out, then things are clear, on the strength of the Constitution, the vice president should take up the appointment.

Contrary to what some people say, it cannot be just anyone, for instance Anpilov [leader of the Working Russia movement]. I read Western newspapers sometimes, and they write about some kind of threat. There is no such threat today, and nobody is fighting against reforms. It is the Supreme Soviet precisely that comes out in favor of reforms. I have already mentioned that we have produced 700 enforceable enactments in the sphere of economic and political reforms and democracy in our country. We have carried out the demarcation of powers. Who has done this, tell me? Has this been done by [presidential] decrees? This has been done by the decisions of the Congress and the Supreme Soviet precisely. Our today's Constitution clearly defines succession. There is no communist threat today. If there is any, it is a result of ill-thought out actions, I repeat. These mistakes committed by official authorities, especially by executive authorities, prompt people to start comparing and saying that the communists were more clever, after all.

Such thoughts and comparisons are springing to mind. Therefore, the champions of communist revival can be found elsewhere and not among the deputies.

[Unidentified correspondent] Could you comment on the reaction of foreign political and public figures to the events after Saturday and Sunday?

[Khasbulatov] I have two opinions on this. Maybe I am wrong but on the one hand the leaders of many states were quick to express their personal support. I am not against it. Naturally, nobody could be against personal support for it is gratifying and pleasant to the ear. But in my view it would be better to support democracy in the Russian Federation. A distorted opinion is taking shape to the effect that a struggle between reformers and antireformers is underway here. And you, many of you, assist in the spreading of this distorted view among the Western public.

In fact, that is not so. We are talking of a reformist course and we are talking of the stupidities committed along the path of this reformist course. So, both I and the Supreme Soviet, a majority—for I cannot speak for everyone—but, in any case, a majority in the Supreme Soviet and a majority in the Congress is for the most radical reforms in our society, for a real and radical improvement in the condition of our sick society. Pardon me, but from among the entire leadership of the Supreme Soviet, when I was being put forward for the post of the first deputy chairman, I remember I was the first to make so bold as to say, albeit timidly, that I supported private property. So, imagine that at the last congress and at my request our sociologists carried out a poll. You know, if I am not mistaken, 987 deputies were there. From among 987, 811 or 813 responded. Well, among these 811 or 813 respondents, 17 deputies turned out to be against private property. And what does this recognition of private property amount to? It means that it is a recognition of a mixed economy; it means the implementation of the most necessary measures, connected with normal privatization.

So, here you are, that is the Congress and what it stands for. So why pin antireformist labels on us? That is why this thesis which is being artificially foisted on us is a mendacious one. That is why the leaders of Western countries probably get the picture that, indeed, it is very difficult for Boris Nikolayevich to hold things together. It is, you know, as if he were faced with a solid wall of people. You know, like in the Greek myths. Heracles fighting Medusa [as heard], making his way through the jungles, everyone hampers him, he is ensnared with these snares. Well, an artificial picture like this. It is a false picture. If things were not so alarming, so tragic, we could only have a good laugh here. In fact, the legislative field, the people's limitless patience, the wish to change the situation is typical of all people and has already become second nature to, I repeat, a majority of deputies, a majority of deputies.

That is the first thing. The second thing—I note, since yesterday, or the day before yesterday, since the second half of the day already there were very many doubts and reflections in the Western press, very serious and, all in all, there is a clear swing toward the view that quite likely, major mistakes have been allowed to slip through and toward statements to the effect that tragic errors were probably made in such attempts to carry out a coup d'etat. And that is in fact nothing other than a real attempt at a coup d'etat. That is unequivocal, no matter what view of the situation you decide to take—at the moment I am expressing my personal opinion of course—no matter how the Congress of People's Deputies may assess this.

Session Opens 24 Mar

LD2403071893 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0715 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow March 24 TASS—A joint meeting of the chambers of the Supreme Soviet (parliament) of Russia has just begun in the House of the Councils here.

The deputies are to pass a decision on the Russian Constitutional Court ruling on the actions of the president of Russia and to consider a draft resolution on the convocation of the 9th Congress of People's Deputies on March 26.

To Discuss Court's Ruling

LD2403071393 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0709 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow March 24 TASS—A joint session of the Russian parliament's two chambers will discuss today the constitutional court's ruling on the constitutionality of President Boris Yeltsin's actions and decisions, linked with his March 20th address to the nation. This item figures in the session's preliminary agenda.

A draft resolution of the parliament to call the 9th of the Congress of People's Deputies in Moscow on March 26th was handed out to parliament members today morning. It is planned to include in the congress's agenda an item "on urgent measures to save the constitutional system of the Russian Federation". There is one more item: "To ask the president of the Russian Federation to take part in the work of the 9th (extraordinary) Congress of People's Deputies".

Khasbulatov, Abdulatipov Meet

LD2403115293 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0750 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Exchange between Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov and Ramazan Abdulatipov, chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities, at the Supreme Soviet session in Moscow—live]

[Text] [Khasbulatov] I will explain. Experienced lawyers have reported to us—I am bringing this to your notice—that the Supreme Soviet's attempt to delay the Congress following the conclusions of the Constitutional Court would be tantamount to the Supreme Soviet preventing the congress from dealing with its own business. This issue is absolutely, 100 percent, an issue for the congress, and it is liable for discussion, immediate discussion, by the congress itself. The congress alone is competent to make a decision on it. Go ahead, microphone 1. Microphone 1, on the presidium, go ahead please.

[Unidentified speaker] We would have examined it (?in parliament).

[Khasbulatov] Well, yesterday we spent the whole day examining it.

[Abdulatipov] The president's appeal caused the extreme forces in the Russian Federation, including the deputy corps, to step up their activity. Yet again we can become hostages to these extreme forces. These extreme forces are very active, more active than the centrist forces. Therefore today I would ask that the composition of this drafting commission for drawing up the decision of the Supreme Soviet today should be discussed, while observing regulations. The discussion should be conducted precisely on the decision.

The conclusions of the Constitutional Court are not evoking doubts in me. There is no need to exclaim ah immediately at the Constitutional Court and immediately turn the Constitutional Court into enemies of the people. We are first in the world in this sense. Let us think about the salvation of Russia today so that the split which is becoming evident in the upper ranks does not spread to the regions and republics of the Russian Federation.

I propose that a drafting commission be selected, the relevant decision of the Supreme Soviet be drawn up, and the decision adopted.

Debates Ninth Congress

LD2403100493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0948 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondents Lyudmila Yermakova and Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow March 24 TASS—In spite of several motions not to adopt any hasty decisions in light of the current complicated situation, the Russian Supreme Soviet approved today in first reading a resolution to convene the 9th (Extraordinary) Congress of People's Deputies on March 26, which is to discuss "urgent measures to save the constitutional system of the Russian Federation". The resolution asks the Russian president to attend the congress. It was adopted practically without any discussion.

The demands of some parliament members not to violate the procedural rules and to give the floor to members of the Constitutional Court, who refused to sign the latter's ruling, were left unheeded. Parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov refused to discuss some alternative drafts of the resolution, as demanded by the Supreme Soviet's democratic wing.

However, the parliament supported the motion of Ramazan Abdulatipov, chairman of the Council of Nationalities, to form an editorial commission to work on the draft resolution. He warned the parliament against "becoming a hostage of left-wing forces again". Abdulatipov urged the deputies to "think about Russia's salvation in order to prevent the split in the centre from spreading to outlying regions".

Speakers of both houses of the parliament, heads of several parliamentary committees and some prominent MPs [members of parliament] were included in the commission.

Agrees on 26 Mar Congress Session

OW2403093393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0924 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The 9th (Extraordinary) Congress of the Russian People's Deputies will be convened on Friday, March 26. The Russian Supreme Soviet adopted this decision on Wednesday [24 March], having discussed the decision of the Russian Constitutional Court regarding President Boris Yeltsin's address to the citizens of Russia presented by the secretary of the Russian Constitutional Court Yuriy Rudkin.

On Tuesday the Constitutional Court made a conclusion that several provisions of the president's address do not correspond to the country's constitution.

On the proposal of parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov the deputies decided not to delay discussion of the Constitutional Court's decision and to consider this issue at an extraordinary Congress of the Russian People's Deputies.

According to one of the items of the draft resolution, adopted by the Supreme Soviet, the congress is to be convened on March 26. 135 deputies voted for the convocation of the congress, 34 were against and 8 deputies abstained from voting.

The draft resolution also proposes to discuss only one issues at the congress, namely "on emergency measures to preserve the constitutional system in the Russian Federation." At the parliament's session the secretary of the Constitutional Court Yuriy Rudkin declined messages stating that the chairman of the constitutional Court Valeriy Zorkin had allegedly handed over the text of the court's conclusion to Boris Yeltsin during the funeral of the President's mother on Tuesday. Rudkin qualified allegations as "blasphemous."

Kostikov on 'Hasty' Decision

LD2403154093 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1500 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] The Russian Federation Supreme Soviet has once again rejected the simple and clear way out of the situation that the president proposed: deciding the destiny of Russian statehood and providing a quick way out of the constitutional crisis through a nationwide vote. This was said by Presidential Press Secretary Vyacheslav Kostikov following a quadripartite meeting in the Kremlin.

In his words, the Supreme Soviet's decision to convene the extraordinary Ninth Congress of People's Deputies on 26 March was made with excessive haste, in effect without any debate, and was creating an extremely dangerous situation in the country.

Parliament, the press secretary noted, was continuing to function in a situation above the law, created by parliament itself and the Eighth Congress. It is totally cut off from public opinion, which emphatically supports the president's address.

[Moscow INTERFAX in English at 1708 GMT on 24 March adds: "The leadership of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet once again turned down the president's offer of a clear-cut and simple way to resolve the constitutional crisis and define the destiny of the Russian state system in a nationwide vote, said Vyacheslav Kostikov, the president's press-secretary, at the end of a four-party meeting Wednesday [24 March] in the Kremlin.

["The hasty decision to call the extraordinary 9th Congress of People's Deputies on March 26 that was taken after little, if any, discussion of the matter, is creating a very dangerous situation in the country, he also stated.

["The parliament, noted Kostikov, continues to operate in an atmosphere of defiance of law that the parliament and the 8th Congress of People's Deputies created. The parliament is totally deaf to public opinion which is resolutely behind the president's appeal.

["Parliament's decision to call the extraordinary congress relies on the controversial and unilateral opinion of the Constitutional Court which, though it never saw the President's decree, has reached conclusions that are manifestly prejudiced, emphasized the president's press-secretary.

["Parliament makes it a point to nudge the country to a confrontation. It is absolutely obvious now that, rather than stabilize the situation, the Supreme Soviet leaders and the Congress seek the ouster of the lawfully elected president and pave the way to power for the forces of a reactionary, revenge-seeking type, Kostikov said.

["The Russian President, said Kostikov, is determined to take consistent efforts to seek the stabilization of the constitutional situation in the country; he will take guidance in the decree 'On Activities Of Executive Structures Pending Overcoming The Power Crisis' and consolidate all healthy Russian democratic forces."]

Report on Morning Session Results

LD2403122393 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0930 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Live report by parliamentary correspondent Aleksandr Ruvinskiy from the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet session in Moscow]

[Excerpt] I would say that at the Supreme Soviet—in the building at the Krasnopresnenskaya embankment—the situation has changed quite dramatically in the last minutes. Let me remind you that, before the break at the morning session, the deputies voted to hold the ninth extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies on 26 March. This was to have been the main point of the decision of the Supreme Soviet, and the drafting commission was instructed to work out the rest of the points of this decision.

When the commission presented these points to the deputies, it turned out that in the decision itself—in its new draft—there was nothing at all about the congress. One of the points of this decision suggested that the Supreme Soviet take note of the Constitutional Court's decision, while the second point was to propose to the president that he reconsider his actions and decisions. Actually, the decision stopped at that.

Chairman Yuriy Voronin reported, however, that in the next few minutes the people's deputies would be getting the text of the decree of the president of the Russian Federation, which had finally been received—a decree about which there were so many debates. In addition to this, a meeting of the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, the president, and the Constitutional Court chairman is scheduled for 1500. It was suggested that the deputies make all further decisions after these events take place.

The next sitting of the session is set for 1730 today. Some kind of final decisions will evidently be adopted then. By all accounts, there is hope that there will be a compromise. [passage omitted]

Chamber Leaders Stress Need for Compromise

LD2403134593 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1130 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow, 24 Mar—Despite the expectations of journalists who hoped that Ruslan Khasbulatov would speak to them today after the morning sitting of parliament, it was the heads of the chambers who met representatives of the mass media at the "White House."

Ramazan Abdulatipov, chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities, noted that the Russian state is "continuously getting into crises." But the options for ways out of crisis, in his words, "are submitted in the form of confrontation rather than in the form of a search for compromise." Clarifying the thought, the chairman of the chamber said that "it has been a real holiday for extreme forces since the president's address to the people."

Having stressed that this has been "a tragedy both for the president and for the deputies," Ramazan Abdulatipov stressed that a compromise should be sought, "the issue should be studied again, and an opportunity should be provided for points to be made to parliament, including by the president."

Commenting on the outcome of the morning sitting of the Supreme Soviet, the chairman of the chamber said: "We decided not to go for the head-on attack which some are calling for, but once again to take a number of measures to get out of this crisis." He added that the parliament "is not revoking the decision it adopted as a basis, but will return to it after elucidating all the facts and clarifying the president's position."

Agreeing with his colleague's view, Veniamin Sokolov, chairman of the Soviet of the Republic, noted that "head-on attacks, as a rule, end in bloodshed." He warned against attempts to reduce the situation merely to a showdown between the country's top two leaders, as certain parts of the mass media often do. "To think in this way is to miss the point," he said.

The point, in the view of Veniamin Sokolov, is "the program according to which the reforms are to be carried out." He believes that there is a clear alternative here: either to take the path of the further destruction of the state, or to carry out democratic changes, strengthening statehood and reforming the economy.

'Mechanism of a Civil War' Noted

LD2403135493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1255 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Lyudmila Yermakova]

[Text] Moscow March 24 TASS—Speaker of the House of Nationalities of the Russian parliament Ramazan Abdulatipov made a clear hint on Wednesday that he is against the impeachment of the president.

One should not "pose for revolutionaries" at the end of the twentieth century. Impeaching the president will be a "revolutionary step", he said at a press conference.

Abdulatipov refused to disclose who initiated the meeting of the president, the prime minister, the parliament speaker and the chief constitutional justice, saying that "Russia was" the initiator.

A compromise between the president and the legislature can be achieved on the basis of a "balanced approach to reforms", said Veniamin Sokolov, speaker of the House of the Republic. He believes the two branches of authority are to focus on the ways out of the economic crisis. Reforms are impeded, in particular, by the absence of a governmental anti-crisis programme, he believes.

Both speakers warned that "the mechanism of a civil war has been switched on by certain forces" and the major task at present "is to bring relations of authorities into the framework of the Constitution".

Abdulatipov and Sokolov said their relations with parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov are characterised "by unity as regards the preservation of the state and respect to the Constitution". However, they added that each of them has his own emotions.

'Unnatural Political Functions' of Court

OW2403111793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1055 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] A group of democratically-oriented deputies believes that the Constitutional Court [CC], above all its chairman, have assumed unnatural political functions; the deputies believe that the CC stated its position before the adoption of a decision on the given issue, and discredited itself as the supreme constitutional arbitration body. Disregarding all complaints about gross violations of the Constitution and of the Russian Federation's laws by the Congress of People's Deputies and by the parliament and its leaders, the Constitutional Court has failed to fulfill its constitutional and moral duty, and violated the principle of objectivity, the deputies stated. They also made the conclusion that the attempt to establish the Constitutional Court as an independent judicial body was a failure.

Rudkin Explains Court Actions

LD2403105993 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0727 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Exchange between Deputy Nosovets and Constitutional Court Secretary Yuriy Dmitriyevich Rudkin at the Russian Supreme Soviet session in Moscow—live]

[Text] [Nosovets] Nosovets, Omsk National-Territorial District 59. Respected colleagues, respected Yuriy Dmitriyevich, I have two questions for you.

My first question: Do you consider it possible for the meeting you have been talking about to be attended not only by your chairman but also by many other judges, on whose behalf Constitutional Court Chairman Zorkin spoke repeatedly in various mass media and in various public structures. While doing so, he qualified the President's address a priori as a crime against the state and an attempt to stage a coup d'etat.

As far as I can tell, at least three articles of the Law on the Constitutional Court have thus been breached, since the chairman of the Constitutional Court, speaking on behalf of the judges as well as himself, determined the ruling beforehand, as it were. This is all the more remarkable because actually your ruling is to a very large extent at variance with his statement. That was question one. One second, Ruslan Imranovich.

Now the second question: We are certainly grateful to you for announcing on television so hastily yesterday that our appeal concerning constitutionality of the congress resolution has been taken for consideration after all. But why had you not considered it before? Why did you start by considering the president's address? After all, these two documents are inseparably linked! So what will happen if you rule that the congress resolution was unconstitutional? After all, the president's address and his whole initiative was based on this document alone, or to be more precise, on its revocation by the Congress?

[Rudkin] Thank you. As for the first question, I would like to answer as follows: Before drawing such a conclusion, one should familiarize oneself closely with the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the Law on the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation. I shall venture to draw your attention, respected People's Deputies, by quoting specifically from Article 20 of the Law on the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, and in particular from Part 3 of this article, which says:

A judge of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation is not allowed—I stress—to state his views publicly anywhere outside Constitutional Court sessions on an issue under consideration at the Constitutional Court, or one that has been taken for consideration by the Constitutional Court. Well, this issue was not being examined by the Constitutional Court, nor had it been taken for consideration by the Constitutional Court at that time. Therefore the chairman of the Constitutional Court had the right to make a statement concerning the address.

As for the second question....[interrupted by noise from the hall] As for the second question, as to why the Constitutional Court has not considered until now the appeal of 58 people's deputies on checking the constitutionality of the resolution of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, I would like to explain to you that the examination of normative acts is not such a simple matter.

First, there has to be a study of the normative act in question by all the judges and then a conference of the judges is called. The rapporteur judge is selected and a specific day for the discussion is fixed. This, I can tell you, is never done in a hurry. I tell you once again, on the question of the president, we were examining not the decrees of the president but his address to the peoples of the Russian Federation.

Examination of Court Sought

OW2303201293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1948 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The parliamentary Reform Coalition plans to introduce for discussion at the Russian Supreme Soviet Wednesday [24 March] a draft of a resolution concerning the activities of the Constitutional Court. One of the coalition's leaders, Lev Ponomarev, announced this to journalists after a closed session of the coalition on Tuesday.

He pointed out that, according to Article 18 of the law On the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, the powers of a Constitutional Court justice may be suspended by a resolution from the Constitutional Court if "the judge presents in the media his or her opinion on an issue studied or taken up for examination by the Russian Federation Constitutional Court before a decision is reached on the issue." Thus, according to Ponomarev, Constitutional Court Chairman Valeriy Zorkin and several other members of the court had no right to participate in the session dedicated to analyzing President Boris Yeltsin's appeal to the Russian people on March 20.

People's Deputy Galina Starovoitova feels the Constitutional Court violated the law by examining the president's address before considering petitions received earlier, including an appeal from 57 deputies on declaring the resolution from the 8th Congress unconstitutional. Moreover, Starovoitova noted, the Constitutional Court should respond only to decisions and actions of the president, but in this case, "the president only expressed intentions." She also called attention to the fact that procedural violations occurred at the Constitutional Court session. Specifically, representatives of the president and the Supreme Soviet did not attend the session.

At present, said Starovoitova, the Constitutional Court, "sensing the weakness of their positions, is holding a regular session and preparing a retrospective analysis of all decrees from the Russian president." She believes the matter "will clearly lead to the president's impeachment."

Deputies Seeking 'Revenge' Against Yeltsin

PM2303144593 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 Mar 93 p 1

[Lyubov Tsukanova report: "Parliament Prepares To Take Revenge"]

[Text] The Russian Federation Supreme Soviet's instantaneous reaction to the address by President Yeltsin can, of course, be explained not only by the tremendous efficiency of the legislative organ's work. The address had been anticipated for a whole week and, naturally, it was suggested that it would contain extraordinary proposals. However, the fact that the session was planned on the Sunday prior to Boris Yeltsin's actual speech, and that the Presidium convened a few minutes after it, forces one to think that they were prepared a priori not to accept it, or at least to perceive it with ambivalence. That is, the hostility between the legislative organ and the president (and the matter does indeed concern the president personally) had reached its height. In his opening speech, fluently delivered, Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov placed the blame for this on Yeltsin, who "has opted for a policy of direct, gross, and harsh confrontation." From his very first words, the speaker set out a declaration of the plan of action, the course of the discussion, and an evaluation of the president's proposals: Yeltsin has attempted to usurp power, he has attempted to "establish a regime of personal authority without prior consultation," and this is the result of "the failure of the economic reforms being carried out by the president."

Few of the deputies were bothered by the fact that none of them had seen the edict signed by the president—as it turned out, the chairman of the Constitutional Court and the general prosecutor had not seen it either. But although it is nothing new for our overpoliticized deputies to discuss political statements (in this instance, the president's television address), the hasty verdict of top state officials like Aleksandr Rutskoy, Valeriy Zorkin, and Valentin Stepankov, and their debates not about a document but about a declaration on the subject of a proposed document, appear more than strange. And although the vice president had seen albeit a draft of the edict and, in his words, refused to sign it, our most eminent jurists have passed a judgment on the illegality of the president's actions (which ones—the speech on television?) on the basis of words: It is, to all appearances, an unprecedented case in the history of jurisprudence.

In line with tradition, the deputies demanded a report from leaders of the power structures—the ministers of defense, security, and internal affairs, and the secretary of the Security Council. The expectation of a threat of forcible actions has become a permanent emotional backdrop in the deputies' milieu, so run-of-the-mill that it even forces one to think that it is knowingly cultivated by a section of the deputies' corps. Thinking along the lines of an "state of emergency" [chrezvychayka] (which, in words, the speaker constantly proposes to reject) is actually very strong—the very fact of convening an emergency session confirms this, as does the ill-concealed disappointment of certain deputies: At the very least, the opposition was hoping for forcible actions by the president, which would have allowed the Supreme Soviet to enact at last the amendment to Article 121.6 of the Constitution automatically depriving the president of his powers. The guarantees contained in Boris Yeltsin's address to observe civil rights and political freedoms in full and its confirmation of the powers of the Congress and the Supreme Soviet knocked the trump card out of the hands of the crafty political gamesters.

The session's decision prompted open disappointment from the "support group"—supporters of the National Salvation Front and "Working Moscow" who are rallying outside the House of Soviets. Having come in anticipation of a "final showdown" with Yeltsin, and having fired up the deputies' intention to do this, they greeted everyone who came out of the "White House" with indignant cries and accusations of "cowardice and treachery" that evening. However convinced colleague Ruslan Khasbulatov is that the current situation is "just the same as in August," it is nevertheless different: Completely different people came to "defend" the people's elected representatives, and the deputies did not earn the people's love.

Human Rights Committee Supports Yeltsin

LD2403111093 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0935 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow, 24 Mar—The Supreme Soviet Committee for Human Rights believes that President Boris Yeltsin's decisions set forth in his address to the people on 20 March answer the supreme principles of the Constitution—namely, the supremacy of people's power and the priority of human rights—and propound a sensible way to settle the political crisis. This message is contained in the committee's statement circulated today after examination of the Russian Federation's Constitutional Court ruling on whether the president's actions and decisions comply with the Russian Constitution.

The committee called on the citizens of Russia and on the world community to support the president's efforts aimed at attaining political stability, developing the democratic process, and implementing economic reform.

The committee believes that, in the conflict between the executive and the legislative power, "the Constitutional Court—which, through its chairman, has taken upon itself the inappropriate political function of an intermediary and declared its stance prior to official investigation of the case, which is contrary to the Russian Federation Law "On the Constitutional Court"—has discredited itself as the highest constitutional arbitrator." At the same time, says the statement, "having ignored the appeal on breaches of the fundamental constitutional principles legally initiated by the Congress of People's Deputies and by the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet, the Constitutional Court has not done its duty."

"At the present time, the attempt to set up the Constitutional Court as an independent institution of judicial power has failed," the statement says.

"The current Constitution is contradictory and is breached by all state bodies, because some of its statutes support the principles of a totalitarian state and others express the political will to build a new Russia," the Committee on Human Rights of the Supreme Soviet "sadly noted".

Panel Highlights Security Concerns

PM2303172193 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 24 Mar 93 p 1

["Statement of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet Defense and Security Committee"; dated 21 March]

[Text] The address of Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin to the citizens of Russia 20 March bears witness to the continuing political crisis that has arisen in the top echelons of power in Russia.

In the face of this, the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet committee, proceeding on the basis of the commitment of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet to act strictly within the framework of the Russian Federation Constitution and laws, declares the need for all organs of state power and administration, the Russian Federation Armed Forces, federal state security organs, foreign intelligence organs, internal affairs organs, and other military formations of the Russian Federation to strictly observe the Russian Federation Constitution and laws in the name of civil peace and the security of Russia.

With this aim, the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet Defense and Security Committee deems it necessary to ensure clear and efficient cooperation between the organs of Russian Federation executive and legislative power, primarily at the level of permanent commissions of the chambers and committees of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet, and the relevant federal organs of executive power which are part of the system for ensuring security.

[Signed] Committee of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet for Defense and Security

[Dated] 21 March 1993

Political Groups, Military Leaders, Others Comment

Russian Unity To Seek Yeltsin's Impeachment

LD2303133593 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1305 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Yuriy Filippov]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Mar—It was decided at today's emergency meeting of factions of the Russian Unity parliamentary opposition bloc that the opposition will raise the question of impeaching the president and will propose convening the Ninth Congress of Russian People's Deputies on 26 March to decide the power question in Russia at the Russian Supreme Soviet session scheduled to begin at 1300 GMT. The Russian Unity bloc is consulting centrist factions before the session to speak as a single force.

Roundup on Support for Yeltsin, Supreme Soviet

LD2403161493 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1035 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, 24 Mar (ITAR-TASS)—President Boris Yeltsin's address to the nation remains at the center of attention of the people of Russia, local authorities, and public organizations. There is a pretty wide range of views and opinions.

In meetings the majority of Vorkuta miners are supporting President Boris Yeltsin's address to the citizens of Russia and his intention to hold a plebiscite. The workers committee and council of representatives of the Independent Trade Union of Miners in the town have passed a joint resolution supporting the president and Government of Russia and the idea of a Russia-wide referendum on the issues proposed by the president. These organizations have decided to "withdraw their trust" from the Supreme Soviet and Congress of People's Deputies of Russia for being impediments to reform. As the president requested, for the time being the Vorkuta miners do not intend to stage demonstrations, rallies, strikes, or other active measures in his support, said Aleksandr Marmalyukov, first deputy chairman of the Independent Trade Union of Miners.

A session of the Irkutsk Oblast soviet on Tuesday supported the 21 March resolution of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet concerning the president's address to the citizens of Russia. It confirmed the powers of head of administration Yuriy Nozhikov, who was dismissed from the post by the supreme leader of the country's executive for an infringement of the law. The session called upon federal bodies to take measures to eradicate the constitutional crisis in Russia. It was proposed, specifically, that representatives of all subjects of the Federation assemble in the immediate future to seek ways out of this worrisome situation.

The president's anxiety over the processes of disintegration in the country, the mounting economic crisis, and confrontation between powers are shared by the inner Soviet of Altay Kray Soviet of People's Deputies and the Altay administration, which believe that the president has the right to raise the question of staging a nationwide vote of confidence in himself as the head of state and will ensure that the vote is held.

A telegram has been sent to the parliament session calling for a conciliation commission to be set up immediately comprising representatives of the president, the Supreme Soviet, and the subjects of the Federation to work out machinery for getting out of the political crisis. The telegram was sent by Aleksandr Surikov, chairman of Altay Kray soviet; Vladimir Rayfikesht, head of administration of the kray; and Nikolay Shuba, representative of the Russian president in the kray. They believe it would be inadvisable to convene a Congress of People's Deputies.

A President Yeltsin support committee has been formed in Chita. Its founders are representatives of the Transbaykal Cossacks, local branches of a number of democratic movements, and private individuals. Fund-raising has started to finance activities in preparation for the nationwide vote planned for 25 April by the president. Democratic forces in Chita plan to hold meetings of Boris Yeltsin supporters and a town-wide meeting in his support.

The Independent Trade Union of Miners in Kuzbass and council of workers committees have come out against the holding of an extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies. In the opinion of the leaders of the workers' movement, the congress may pursue a single aim: removing Boris Yeltsin from his post. It was decided to organize canvassing points in support of the president at the region's coal enterprises. The Independent Trade Union of Miners in Kuzbass has announced that should there be an attempt to impeach the president, they retain the right to take more decisive action than a strike.

Russian Cossacks, who "have for centuries defended the homeland and the sovereign without fear or reproof," have announced their unwavering support for the course proclaimed by Boris Yeltsin, says an address to the president of the Russian Federation by the atamans and the Union of Cossack Hordes of Russia, supported by the Russian Association of Voters.

Committee To Stage Pro-Yeltsin Rally 28 Mar

LD2303133893 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1244 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Velichko]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Mar—The Public Committee of Democratic Forces of Russia has appealed to the Russian people to participate in an all-Russian action on 28 March in support of the people's right to a referendum and against the usurpation of power by the Congress. An address to Russian citizens was adopted at a meeting of the democratic public and signed by many political figures. The organizers are planning a Moscow-wide demonstration and rally, as well as a procession to Red Square, to express support for the Russian president's proposal on holding a referendum.

Party Representatives Meet Press on Crisis

OW2303135393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1334 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Leader of the Smena-New Policy faction, Andrey Golovin, believes that there are three ways of overcoming the crisis: either Boris Yeltsin gives up his presidential powers, or he is removed from his post in accordance with the law, or early elections are held.

On Tuesday, Golovin gave a press conference jointly with representatives from Civic Union, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions and the Congress of Left-Wing Democratic Forces.

Chairman of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, Igor Klochkov, said that given the long-overdue crisis of authority, the most reasonable thing would be to hold early presidential and parliamentary elections. He also said that the president had the right to hold a referendum to know the extent of people's trust.

Aleksandr Vladislavlev, a leader of the Civic Union, believes that the search for a compromise between the leading political forces and the attainment of national accord are possible and vitally important. This work must be done before the course of events become irreversible, he said. We must shift our attention to economic programs and allow the government to implement them, he added. He also expressed his negative attitude to "any severe moves that may complicate the process of reforms".

Lyudmila Vartazarova, a representative of the Consultative Council of the Congress of Left-Wing Democratic Forces, also believes that without national accord, reforms will be a failure. I have the impression, she said, that the president's team is provoking unconstitutional moves. I think society will show common sense and will not get entangled in a civil war, said Lyudmila Vartazarova.

Afghan War Veterans Union Backs Yeltsin

OW2303135793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1334 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Union of Afghan War veterans declared that its members give their backing to the political course of Russian President Boris Yeltsin aimed at the stabilization of society.

A telegram sent on behalf of this 320,000-strong organization (there are branches of this Union in Russia and other Commonwealth states) expresses support for Boris Yeltsin's political course.

In addition, the telegram expresses deep condolences to Yeltsin due to the death of his mother.

Officers Assembly Rejects Leaders' Orders

PM2303142193 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 23 Mar 93 p 3

[By S. Turchenko]

[Text] A Moscow region officers' assembly was held on the day Yeltsin and his entourage attempted a constitutional coup. As though predicting a misfortune, at the same time as analyzing the most serious state of the army and the reasons for its disintegration, the delegates (255 of them from 19 krays and oblasts assembled in all) expressed concern over the explosive situation that has taken shape in Russia.

A real officer is a citizen of his country, and he cannot stand aside from the processes going on in it. The hypocritical slogan "the army is outside politics" was thought up by the destroyers of our state with one sole aim, namely to rob the people of their last defense. But can a real defender of the motherland be a detached observer when it is being destroyed, sold, and betrayed?!

No, he cannot was the answer of the officers' assembly. On behalf of all the officers of the Moscow region, it declared its resolution that during these difficult days, the army is with the people, with the representative power that was elected by them, and with those who are in favor of the precise and unconditional implementation of the Constitution.

The assembly adopted an appeal to generals and officers of the leading organs of the Defense Ministry, the Security Ministry, and the Internal Affairs Ministry, that **anticonstitutional** orders should not be carried out if they are issued by the adventurist leaders of the regime that is in its death throes. It proposed that by decisions of the officers' assemblies of regiments and large units, the commanders and chiefs who try to carry out such orders should be dismissed, and the materials on the cases in question should be sent to military prosecutors' offices so that criminal proceedings can be instituted.

During the Russian Supreme Soviet emergency session, Army General Grachev attacked the Moscow region officers assembly, saying that it is calling people to arms and destabilizing the situation among the troops. Those who were present at the assembly know that no such appeals were made by it, although, unfortunately, this may happen when the people need their army to protect them with weapon in hand. And the army is not worth a dime if it is not ready for this.

The reason for these attacks by the minister is clear. The point is not just that the assembly once again confirmed the demand of the officers to the Russian Supreme Soviet to raise the issue of dismissing Grachev and appointing Colonel General V. Achalov, who enjoys deserved prestige among the troops, to the post of defense minister. Another thing is also important: The officers expressed mistrust in the ruling regime. It is clear that without patronage, the minister really may find himself face to face with the law, and he will have to answer with the full severity of the law for both the disintegration of the army and complicity in corrupting its top echelon, documentary evidence of which the officers' assembly has sent to the Russian Supreme Soviet and prosecutor's office.

Smena Opposes Early Elections

MK2303132093 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 20 Mar 93 p 10

[Aleksandr Koretskiy report: "'Smena-New Policy:' There Will Be No Reelections"]

[Text] Andrey Golovin and Igor Muravyev, coordinators of the parliamentary faction "Smena-New Policy," told yesterday's press conference on the results of the Eighth Congress, held in the House of Soviets, that there are no legal underpinnings for reelecting the present deputy corps and the president. The faction leaders admitted that the majority of voters are negative toward the congress' activity and support the idea of creating a presidential republic in Russia.

According to the press conference participants, the political situation in Russia points to the inability and incompetence of the federal authorities, primarily the president, to deal with questions of economic stabilization. The political struggle the central authorities are engaged in, according to Muravyev, is being waged only to excuse their own incompetence. Smena members believe that the consequence of the "crisis in supreme authority" is the "real possibility of growing separatist ambitions among the leaders of the components of the federation," whose self-esteem has considerably increased lately. By way of example Muravyev, who worked throughout the four days of the congress session in the drafting commission, said that at one of the sittings Tuva representatives announced that their separatists intended to raise at the 24 March routine session of the Tuva Supreme Soviet the question of the republic's secession from Russia.

According to Andrey Golovin, to get out of the crisis the president must strictly observe the provisions of the current Constitution. As for the three options of resolving the political crisis that Boris Yeltsin allegedly has, which have been constantly aired by the presidential entourage, according to Golovin, "these are different variants of one and the same deed." If an attempt is made to follow any one of them, Article 121-6 of the Russian Constitution, unfrozen by the Congress, providing for an immediate termination of presidential powers in the event of dissolution or suspension of any legally elected representative body of power, will instantly take effect.

At the same time, replying to a question about the population's attitude to the congress results, Andrey Golovin admitted that 90 percent of the voters do not consider the congress' performance to be adequate and, "without fully understanding the idea of a presidential republic," they support it. The speakers attributed this to the fact that "the ongoing chaos in the country is not to anybody's liking." Commenting on the issue of early reelection of the president and the deputy corps, the faction leaders observed that this possibility was not legally provided for. And even if corresponding changes are made in the legislation, they may not apply to the present composition of the deputy corps and to the president since the law has no retroactive force.

Demonstrators Demand Yeltsin's Resignation

OW2303173293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1713 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday, several hundred people carrying red banners and St. Andrew flags gathered in front of the parliament building to demand the president's resignation and punishment of the democrats. Through loudspeakers, the organizers urged the Russian citizens to set up "district voluntary units to defend Soviet power". War-time music filled the air. All along the building, posters were fixed reading: "Down with Justice Acting on Order from the Zionists and Masons!", "Disclose the National and Religious Origin of the Media Leaders!", "Down with the Zionist Den of Stepankov's Office!"

Communist Party Condemns Yeltsin's Actions

LD2403014193 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By correspondent German Solomatin; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] At a news conference in Novyy Arbat in Moscow today, the leadership of the Russian Communist Party presented journalists with a virtual explanation of a statement by their central executive committee that was published on 20 March. Speaking on behalf of the Russian Communist Party, whose activities have not yet been registered by the Russian Ministry of Justice, the participants in the news conference, on behalf of the 12,000 party members, described the Russian president's television appeal as an act of a coup d'etat, the aim of which was to establish a dictatorship.

The Russian Communist Party leadership sharply condemned the transition to special rule, and merely because the president had violated the holy of holies—democracy—by demonstrating his adherence to pathological anticommunism.

It was also reported at this news conference that in the summer, when metallurgical and chemical works start up, an ecological apocalypse and a civil war will start. They reported that American scientists had worked out a plan of reducing the world's population whereby 115 million people in Russia would be subject to elimination.

It was also stated at this news conference that an end should be put to reforms and privatization, and they promised to create party vouchers in works collectives, to hold a Leninist day of voluntary work [subbotnik] to mark Lenin's birthday and the May Day holiday. They concluded that without a change in its political course and Yeltsin's resignation, the political ruin of the present government is ensured.

City Hall, Unions, Parties on Yeltsin's Actions

MK2403063493 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 93 p 2

[Olga Odintsova, Anna Ostapchuk, Indira Dunayeva reports under the rubric "Party Movement": "City Hall: Yeltsin Statement—Attempted Coup"]

[Text] [Odintsova] Yesterday the Moscow City Hall Smaller Council prepared, in short order, a number of statements assessing the Russian Federation president's Saturday television address on the introduction in the country of "special rule."

Also prepared were draft calls to the Russian Federation parliament, Constitutional Court, president, and

Moscow residents, where City Hall recognized as necessary the holding of a national referendum "on condition of the possibility that the Russian Federation president and Congress of People's Deputies submit to it their own questions."

Following long debates, however, the presidium managed to persuade the deputies to limit themselves to taking as their basis only two documents: a statement describing Yeltsin's actions as an "attempted coup d'etat in the interests of the nomenklatura mafiosi clan led by him," and a call to Muscovites asking them to remain calm, and to observe law and the Russian Federation Constitution.

[Ostapchuk] The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia Executive Committee adopted a statement urging the holding "in the shortest time" of simultaneous new elections of a president and people's deputies. As for the drafting of a law on elections and holding them, that should be the responsibility of the Russian parliament—"together with the country's major public forces and trade unions."

The main points and tenor of the statement by the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia coincide with a statement adopted the day before by the Federation's militant vanguard—the Labor Party.

The Labor Party, however, calls not only for early elections, but also for "formalizing in law the self-resignation" of the president, into which he sent himself with the help of his call to the people on 20 March 1993.

The board of the People's Party Free Russia showed much more moderation. They called on all political forces of the country "to refrain from actions fanning passions fraught with violence," and to continue "round-table" consultations. The board of the People's Party Free Russia recommended to the Supreme Soviet to "appeal to the Constitutional Court for an official judgment on the constitutionality of the president's actions."

Today, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, the People's Party Free Russia, and the Labor Party will hold a joint press conference.

[Dunayeva] The Republican Party of Russia coordination council supported the president's call and announced that it will be contributing to a successful holding of the national voting on questions proposed by Yeltsin. The coordination council noted the unconstitutionality of the Eighth Congress's decisions, while recognizing that the president also had acted unconstitutionally. Most Republicans who signed this resolution are led by Petr Filippov, cochairman of the Russian Federation Republican Party and head of one of the analytical centers under the president.

A smaller part of the Republicans (which, however, was joined by nearly the entire political council of the party—Vladimir Lysenko, Igor Yakovenko, Vyacheslav Shestakovskiy, Aleksandr Mekhanik) brought along their own resolution, in which they announce that the best way out of the prevailing situation is the scrapping of all unconstitutional decisions made by both the Congress and the president, and the holding of early general elections.

Western Group of Forces Reiterates Neutrality

LD2403063993 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0610 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksey Korinenko]

[Text] Berlin, 24 Mar—Formations and units of the Western Group of Forces [WGF] of the Russian Federation Armed Forces are engaged in scheduled combat training. The WGF staff did not issue any orders or instructions on combat readiness for the troops, and its formations and units were not put on an increased state of combat readiness. The WGF press center release circulated here on 23 March stated this in connection with questions put by various German media to the WGF command about the level of the state of combat readiness of Russian troops stationed on German territory.

In the wake of the latest political developments in Moscow, the Russian Federation Armed Forces strictly adhere to the principle that "the Army stays outside politics," the statement notes. At the same time, the document stresses that the planned withdrawal of personnel, equipment, arms, and materiel of WGF units to Russian territory continues in strict accordance with agreements.

Military, Security Units Observing 'Neutrality'

PM2403084993 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 24 Mar 93 p 1

[Unattributed untitled report]

[Text] Despite the complex political situation which has developed in the Russian Federation, units and subunits of the Army, Russian Federation internal troops, Russian Security Ministry staffers—and today attention is fixed on all these state structures possessing forces—are carrying out their usual everyday tasks. For example, the motorized infantry brigade stationed in Moscow (Teplyy Stan) is now at the Gorokhovetskiy training center. Airborne troops from the Tula Airborne Division have not moved from the spot and do not intend to. Their main tasks are to hone their military skills and to resolve problems connected with withdrawing airborne subunits from the Baltics.

We managed to get in contact with Major General Igor Rubtsov, commander of the F.E. Dzerzhinskiy Motorized Infantry Division of internal troops. He reported that the majority of the combined unit's subunits are now at the training ground. The division commander gave the names of the officers in charge of exercises at the training center: Lieutenant Colonels Vasiliy Pokrovskiy and Gennadiy Baburov, and Major Igor Ovchinnikov....

In the Security Ministry subunits which we happened to visit in recent days, there is also a normal work routine. For example, the other day a staffer from a fire-fighting detachment near Moscow was detained when receiving a bribe of 1 million rubles. The Russian Federation Security Ministry's own security service carried out an operation to retrieve arms stolen from one of the ministry's staffers. As a result three criminals were arrested. Similar reports are coming in from Russian Federation Security Ministry staffers in other regions of Russia.

As we can see, the men with arms are faithful to their oath and political neutrality. Incidentally, the photograph which our photographer took in the course of combat training exercises also proves this.

General Confirms Army Backs Constitution, People

MK2403143393 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 24 Mar 93 p 10

[By Vladimir Makartsev]

[Text] Major General Gennadiy Ivanov, chief of the Defense Ministry's directorate for military organizational development and reform, held a news conference at the Russian Defense Ministry on 23 March on problems with developing a military doctrine and on the progress of Army reform. Considering the fact that the fundamentals of military doctrine were drafted as early as six months ago and submitted to the Supreme Soviet Defense and Security Committee, the briefing that took place was used by the Defense Ministry as yet another opportunity to state broadly its own position, in particular on problems of the constitutional crisis. Gennadiy Ivanov pointed out that "the Russian military doctrine being worked out today includes conceptual approaches that will make it possible to avoid drawing the Army into a political conflict even at the time of a change of power." Its political part points outs plainly that the use of the Armed Forces in an internal political struggle is ruled out. Otherwise, it would be regarded as an action directed at undermining the country's defense capability. Speaking about the conflict between the legislative and executive powers, Gen. Ivanov stressed that "the Army was and is on the side of the Constitution, and—in principle—on the side of the people. Therefore the Army is awaiting a compromise and hopes for one." Attempts to draw the Army into the political conflict were undertaken as early as before the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies. The course of reform in the Army and the delay in the adoption of a military doctrine were used as a pretext. According to KOMMERSANT-DAILY experts, the heightening social tensions among servicemen, especially those who are to come under personnel cuts or who are to be withdrawn from a foreign territory, has in fact created certain possibilities for "playing the army card." Despite powerful pressure from all sides, however, Defense Minister Pavel Grachev has managed to preserve a balance to date. Thus, the hopes for maintaining the status quo rest on substantial foundations.

Regions React to Yeltsin Declaration, Parliament

Standoff Viewed 'Calmly'

PM2303153993 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 93 First Edition p 4

[Roundup of correspondents' reports: "What Russia Thinks. Our Own Correspondents Report"]

[Text] St. Petersburg: Six Draft Decisions [by correspondent Yuriy Kukanov]

Six draft decisions—from unconditional support for the president to condemnation of a coup d'etat—were submitted for discussion by the St. Petersburg Inner Soviet. Deputies proposed 34 amendments to the half-page text of adopted basic draft. As a result, the majority of votes was cast in favor of a decision expressing concern about the disruption to the balance of power, approving the idea of new elections to the representative and executive authorities, and appealing to citizens to remain calm. The deputies did not heed the mayor of St. Petersburg, who called on them to support the president, but nor did they express any resolute approval for the position of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet.

As for the referendum, according to figures from the St. Petersburg Sociological Scientific Research Center, which polled 1,210 citizens on the eve of the Seventh Congress of People's Deputies, 53 percent of respondents intend to take part in the 11 April referendum. But 42 percent of those polled advocated holding a referendum on the question of redistributing powers between the president, the Congress of People's Deputies, and the Supreme Soviet.

It will very soon become clear just how voters' moods are changing. Representatives of various democratically oriented political organizations called on the residents of the city on the Neva to take part in the all-Russian political action 28 March.

Tambov: New General Election Needed [by correspondent Yevgeniy Pisarev]

The president's address to the citizens of Russia has been greeted calmly in the provinces. The politicized section of the population assessed it as a development in the confrontation between the legislature and the executive. A specific step was expected from the president, and he has taken this step.

A routine meeting of the "Fatherland" people's patriotic movement was held 21 March in which Anatoliy Safonov, chairman of the city soviet, took part. In connection with the president's address the meeting organizers altered the agenda and the meeting turned into a rally. Those present condemned the president's actions as being in breach of the Constitution.

The same day representatives of movements and parties and city soviet deputies met at city hall and discussed the prevailing situation. City Mayor Valeriy Koval, supporting the president's actions, nonetheless stated that from the standpoint of the existing Constitution the president's position is vulnerable. There is just one solution—to hold new elections to all branches of power.

Private farmers backed the president.

A telegram was sent to B. Yeltsin on behalf of the Council of Representatives of Democratic Parties and Movements:

"We support the measures indicated in your address as being necessary to protect democracy against attempts by the nomenklatura Congress to stifle it in its constitutional embrace. Let the people decide."

Rostov-na-Donu: Rally of Cossacks Announced [by correspondent Vadim Ogurtsov]

On Sunday evening the council of Don cossack hetmans adopted a decision, and the order went out to cossack districts, yurts, and villages for subunits of delegates to assemble in Rostov.

The merchant Paramonov's house resembles a military headquarters: Envoys from the cossack heartland are coming and going, dispatches are being issued and received, and the military administration's duty officer has issued a strict reminder over the telephone that there should be "no weapons, not even a penknife!"

"The discussion of the relationship between the legislature and the executive that has been imposed on the people by the Congress is not only illegal but lacks any basic logic," Vasiliy Kaledin, hetman of the Don cossacks, said. "The people are being treated like little children and asked whom they love more—Mom or Pop. If priority is given solely to the executive once and for all, it will lead to dictatorship. If priority is given to the legislature it will mean anarchy, in our view. But, given the current situation, whereby the Congress has deprived the president of virtually all his main powers to exercise his functions, the balance of power seems seriously skewed in favor of the Congress. As for the Congress, the deputies are temporary figures: They pass laws and depart, and all power is left in the hands of a single man—Khasbulatov. So, choosing the lesser of 'two evils,' the hetmans' council prefers the president."

Saransk: Contravening the Foundations of Statehood [ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA information report]

The Mordovian Supreme Soviet adopted a decree 21 March ruling the Russian Federation president's address as contravening the foundations of statehood and destabilizing the sociopolitical position in the country. The republic's Supreme Soviet supported the appeal from the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet Presidium aimed at protecting the Russian Federation's constitutional system.

Nizhniy Novgorod: Executive Must Be Strengthened, But Within the Law [by correspondent Andrey Shishov]

The people of Nizhniy Novgorod reacted just as calmly to the Russian president's emergency TV appearance as they did to the results of the recent Congress.

Not a single political force staged any rallies or demonstrations on 21 March. Governor Boris Nemtsov is on leave. Stores and public transport are working as before. No extra militia details have been seen on the streets either.

According to Sergey Belkovskiy, an oblast soviet deputy, the president had taken a logical step outside the framework of the Constitution. But, Sergey Belkovskiy noted, the struggle is not one between the top executive and the legislature but within society itself. And its outcome will largely depend on how the Federation components—the regions—behave.

In the opinion of members of the Nizhniy Novgorod Inner Soviet, it is necessary to stop the infighting in the top echelons of the Russian organs of power and to set about constructive work to get the country out of the crisis. They stated this Sunday at their conference, which was chaired by Aleksandr Kosarikov, chairman of the city soviet.

Aleksandr Kosarikov stated that the city soviet has operated and will continue to operate in just the same way as the city's rayon soviets. "Nobody has closed us down," he said.

This was also stated on local TV that evening by Yevgeniy Krestyaninov, chairman of the oblast soviet, who called on the people of Nizhniy Novgorod to remain calm and continue the reforms for everyone's sake.

Although outwardly Nizhniy Novgorod people seem calm, inwardly each of them is experiencing what has happened in their own way. People here remember that the president's share of the vote in Nizhniy Novgorod was almost 80 percent.

Krasnodar: President Places His Fate in Hands of People [by correspondent Vladimir Udachin]

This year has seen mild weather in southern Russia, and the peasants are now striving to make up for lost time. Consequently, the Kuban has generally been calm about the political passions that flared up over the weekend in the Olympian heights of the Kremlin.

Nikolay Yegorov, head of the kray administration: Nothing worrying has happened. Is the president entitled to appeal to the people? Yes, he is. Is the president entitled to put the question of confidence in him to a nationwide vote? Yes, he is. The president is placing his fate in the hands of the people, in the hands of voters. What is wrong about that, or about the fact that Boris Nikolayevich has called for order and discipline?! The kray administration will be doing everything to ensure that the 25 April nationwide vote goes ahead in the Kuban and does so peacefully, without any excesses. The administration's position coincides with that of the government, which supports the Russian Federation president.

As for Sunday's emergency Supreme Soviet session, it seemed to me that there was no reason for such a hasty assembly, since there was no subject to discuss—no actual copies of the president's edicts were available.

Aleksandr Zhdanovskiy, chairman of the kray soviet of people's deputies: The president's address alarmed me and put me on my guard. Although the president is entitled to appeal to the people, the aim of this appeal is not entirely clear—all the more so as by no means everything in it was in accordance with constitutional norms.

Yes, the president is entitled to put the question of confidence in himself to a referendum, but why does he need to introduce "special rule," and why limit the rights of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet?

Viktor Kvasov, general director of the "Kavkaz M" joint-stock company: As a manager I back the president, who bears the full burden of responsibility for the fate of reform. And there is no need to dramatize the situation and allege that dictatorship looms.

Nobody is disbanding anything. Both the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet remain in place. And the president confirmed this in his address. There is enough work for everyone!

The main thing is to ensure that it is joint and harmonious work to extricate the Russian economy from the crisis. I personally will be supporting the president in the 25 April referendum.

Major General Yuriy Netkachev, commander of the 49th Army: The opinion of most officers is that politicians should sort out their own relationship themselves, and we military men should keep out of political storms.

The president, the government, and the Supreme Soviet are all concerned about the Army. We realize that no fairy godmother is going to wave a magic wand allowing us to fly off into a world of plenty overnight. But there has been progress. The president's edict allocates additional appropriations for the construction of housing and barracks. Construction of a 2,000-bed camp is starting near Krasnodar. That is already a great help.

And our task is multifaceted—deploying and training troops and doing everything to ensure that everyone without exception sleeps peacefully in southern Russia.

Tomsk: No Unrest in Collectives [by Aleksandr Chernykh]

A session of the oblast's inner soviet was hastily convened Sunday. It supported the Russian Supreme Soviet Presidium's appeal "To Citizens of the Russian Federation" and the decision to convene an extraordinary ninth congress.

It was stressed that executive organs should abide strictly by the Constitution. The Inner Soviet put forward an initiative to hold a Second Extraordinary Congress of Siberia's inner soviets. An appeal was made to the participants in the "Siberian Accord" interregional association to come out in defense of Mukha and Nozhikov, the heads of the Novosibirsk and Irkutsk Oblast administrations.

An emergency session of the Tomsk Oblast Soviet is being convened today, 23 March. Political parties and movements have been polarized still further. The "Solidarity and Reform" coalition has called for support to be given to the plan proposed by the president for getting out of the crisis. If this fails to happen, early elections to all branches of power at all levels—including the Constitutional Court—should be held in 1993. Representatives of communist, workers, and patriotic movements have held a rally in defense of the Constitution and the power of the soviets.

I was told by Viktor Kress, head of the oblast administration, that the most important thing now is to prevent any confrontation between political forces which could lead to clashes and bloodshed. A directive has been issued instructing all local administration heads to take measures to ensure no interruptions to the work of vitally important installations. Viktor Kress reaffirmed the executive's adherence to the Constitution. As he put it, the administration will carry out the decisions of both branches of power.

Support for Yeltsin Reported

LD2303153393 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1512 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow March 23 TASS—Russia is continuing to discuss most keenly President Yeltsin's Saturday [20 March] televised address to the nation. Messages are are coming in from all over the country.

The Belgorod regional organisation of the Russian Republican Party has backed President Yeltsin's actions. It has called on all people's deputies not to obstruct the nation's free expression of will. Party supporters have urged the population to come to the polls on April 25.

"President Boris Yeltsin is the only guarantee of stability in Russia today," It is believed by Vladimir Morgunov and Marlen Nakhapetov, co-chairmen of the St. Petersburg Businessmen's Forum. Their statement, released here today, gives allout support to the Russian president.

The president's representative in Yaroslavl region Vladimir Varukhin has backed President Yeltsin's stand and his programme for pulling the country out of the economic and constitutional impasse. The deadlock, in his opinion, was provoked by the latest decisions of the Russian Supreme Soviet.

Representatives of Kamchatka political parties and movements adhere to diametrically opposite views. The bloc of parties and movements of democratic orientation, the Union of Businessmen, and the "Memorial" society have backed the president's steps to overcome the crisis and have urged the peninsula's population to take an active part in the voting on April 25. However, the Kamchatka Democratic Party Organisation is sharply opposed to the president's address. The resolution, adopted by members of the local communist party, sets before its primary organisations the task of setting up special centres to explain the essence of the current situation to the population and to launch preparations for future elections.

Regional Opinion Summarized

MK2303120693 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 93 pp 1, 3

[NEGA report under "Summary" rubric: "Presidential Appeal to Citizens: Two Days After. Capitals of Russian Federation and CIS Comment on Situation in Moscow Corridors of Power"]

[Text] Kazan—In an interview with the NEGA agency before the start of the republic parliament session which opened on 22 March, Farid Mukhametshin, chairman of the Tatarstan Supreme Soviet, declared: "We advocate that no side should take extreme steps." He said that "all opportunities for compromise have not yet been exhausted." The head of the Tatarstan parliament believes that Boris Yeltsin's television appeal still does not provide grounds for any reaction. In his opinion, it is necessary to wait for the Russian president's official documents and "examine them with a pencil." "Therefore, Boris Yeltsin's initiatives will not be discussed for the time being at the session that has opened," Farid Mukhametshin emphasized. The Tatarstan Supreme Soviet session is discussing the republic's social protection program.

Nazran—The Moscow events, said Isa Kostoyev, the Russian Federation president's representative in the Ingush Republic, obliged President Ruslan Aushev, Vice President Boris Agapov, and Ondar Chimit-dorzha, the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet's representative in Ingushetia, to meet as early as Sunday. All four—including Kostoyev, Yeltsin's personal representative in Nazran—decided that, since the Ingush Republic is not a subject of the Russian Federation, (the Federation Treaty between it and Russia has not yet been signed), in this situation the leadership of Ingushetia will abide by the provisions of the Russian Federation Constitution, and the president can count on Nazran's support on those issues where he is right. But if the Russian parliament is right, Ingushetia will take the side of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet.

At a congress of the peoples of Ingushetia held Sunday in Nazran, it was proposed to discuss the Russian Federation president's appeal to the citizens of the Russian Federation and the subsequent events in the Russian organs of power. But a decision stemming from the republic's leadership was adopted to "refrain from any statements in this regard."

Nalchik—Gennadiy Gubin, vice president of Kabardino-Balkaria, has reported that on 22 March a session of the Presidential Council was held under the leadership of President Valeriy Kokov of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic [KBR], at which the Russian Government's letter was read out.

On the afternoon of 22 March the KBR president held consultations with Khachim Karmokov, chairman of the KBR Supreme Soviet, to formulate a joint line of conduct regarding the crisis that has the country in its grip. Gubin pointed out that, whatever decision is adopted, it will be adopted within the framework of the existing constitutions of the KBR and Russia and the Federation Treaty. "The chief thing for us is to maintain order in the republic. No special rule will be introduced in the KBR," the vice president said.

A joint appeal by the president and the chairman of the KBR Supreme Soviet to the republic's population was expected toward evening.

Petrozavodsk—A statement adopted 21 March at a closed session of the Karelian Supreme Soviet and the republic Council of Ministers Presidium in connection with Russian President Yeltsin's appeal to the citizens of Russia was disseminated at a news conference in the Karelian parliament on 22 March.

The statement reads: "The president's appeal to the citizens of Russia and his announcement of special rule in the country have caused serious concern in the Karelian Supreme Soviet Presidium and Council of Ministers.

"The introduction of special rule in the country, which is not provided for in the Russian Constitution, could lead to further destabilization of the situation and undermine the foundations of Russia's state system enshrined in the Federation Treaty. In this connection the Karelian Supreme Soviet Presidium and the republic Council of Ministers Presidium declare that they will act in strict accordance with the Federation Treaty, the Russian Constitution, and the Karelian Constitution."

Viktor Stepanov, chairman of the Karelian Supreme Soviet, said that he sees no grounds for introducing a state of emergency in Karelia.

A session of the Karelian Supreme Soviet will meet 23 March to discuss the situation in the country.

Ufa—Yesterday the Bashkortostan Supreme Soviet Presidium adopted a statement to the Russian Federation president, Supreme Soviet, and Constitutional Court. It says that "it is proposed to introduce special rule in the country until the crisis in power has been overcome." The document describes this step as one that "effectively starts a new phase in the constitutional crisis." The statement's authors consider the introduction of special rule, if "it is implemented," to be an attempt to suspend the validity of the Russian Federation Constitution, the Federation Treaty, and the republics' constitutions by forcible methods in order thereby to obtain additional powers for the executive branch. "The further development of democracy and the implementation of further political and socioeconomic reforms has been jeopardized," the statement says. It asserts that "instead of constructive work toward common aims the road of struggle and confrontation has been chosen, and this road is leading to stalemate and catastrophe." The Bashkortostan Supreme Soviet leadership is convinced that "the existing Russian Federation Constitution, Federation Treaty, and constitutions of the republics making up the Federation provide the legislative and executive branches at the center and in the provinces with the opportunity of further reforming our society on the principles of democracy, federalism, and the separation of powers, of creating a market economy, and of ensuring social protection for the population..." The statement stresses: "In these conditions the demands to change the constitutional system, the infringement of the legislative branch's rights, and the introduction of special-rule measures should be regarded either as an attempt to establish an authoritarian regime or a political maneuver making it possible to evade responsibility for the state of affairs in the country." The Bashkortostan Supreme Soviet Presidium reports that "there is no conflict between the legislative and executive branches in the republic; the population is viewing with understanding both the results of the Eighth Congress of Russian Federation People's Deputies and President Yeltsin's activity to implement socioeconomic transformations in the country."

Bashkortostan Supreme Soviet Chairman Murtaz Rakhimov, commenting for NEGA on the statement by the presidium of the republic parliament, said: "I am extremely surprised by Boris Yeltsin's statement, which practically introduces a dictatorship." According to Rakhimov, "we respected Yeltsin as a fervent supporter of the Federation Treaty, but now he is violating it." The Bashkir leader believes that "even if Yeltsin's edicts are going to differ from his appeal, it does not matter—the president of a great country must take responsibility for such statements." "Neither I nor our government have ever been accountable to the president and we never will be, irrespective of any edicts," Rakhimov stressed. At the same time the head of the Bashkortostan parliament noted that "we will support Boris Yeltsin as a man who will implement the Federation Treaty." In his opinion, the appeal is a step not so much by Yeltsin as by his entourage.

Yakutsk—Mikhail Nikolayev, president of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), said that "there is much that is unclear" in the Russian president's television appeal. On the one hand it talks of the "coordination of actions of federal authorities and the Federation's subjects in strict accordance with the Federation Treaty. On the other hand it talks about the accountability of the governments of the Russian Federation's subjects "directly to the Russian president and government." Furthermore, Nikolayev does not understand the meaning of what Yeltsin refers to as a "procedure for special rule." The president of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) therefore considers "additional explanations from Boris Yeltsin" to be essential. In his opinion, Russian parliamentarians have been hasty in assessing Boris Yeltsin's actions without having the president's edict in their hands. At the same time the president of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) believes that "the president has the right to ascertain the people's opinion regarding their confidence in him." But according to him it is still not clear what a "vote-poll" [golosovaniye-opros] is. "We will not be hasty in reacting to events in Moscow, until we receive the documents," Nikolayev stated. The Yakutian leader believes that "Russia's fate largely depends on the position of the Federation's subjects." According to him, "no matter what measures are taken by the center, they must follow the same direction as the Federation Treaty."

Ashgabat—Boris Yeltsin's television appeal caught Turkmenistan President Saparmurad Niyazov and his inner circle during the night prior to their departure for the United States.

Nevertheless, the day before the visit Niyazov had time to state that "the crisis in power in the Russian Federation is reflected in all republics of the former USSR, and the only hope is that Russian politicians will have enough wisdom to seek a solution to the awkward situation."

Observers in Ashgabat think that what lies behind the Turkmen president's words is above all alarm over the Russian Armed Forces' behavior. Not having a full-scale national army, Turkmenistan is forced to reconcile itself to being dependent on Russian officers who continue to obey orders from Moscow. The Turkmen authorities' position will largely depend on the position of the army and on whether it observes neutrality or supports a particular side.

At any rate, circles close to the Turkmenistan Government consider a firm position of noninterference in Russia's internal affairs to be essential.

Yerevan—Aram Abramyan, the Armenian president's press secretary, has disseminated a statement that reads: "Contradictions between the executive and legislative branches of power are characteristic of many countries, particularly the recent new states formed since the breakup of the USSR. In these states these contradictions have objective causes—above all, the absence of new constitutions clearly delimiting the functions of the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. It is for precisely these reasons that the political situation in Russia has been exacerbated."

In the opinion of the republic's leadership, stability in Russia, as in any other CIS country, can be achieved by adopting new constitutions and through a people's referendum: "We hope that none of the political forces in Russia will violate the law."

Kiev—"I resolutely support the reforming policy of the Russian leadership and am convinced that it cannot be implemented without national accord. Ukraine will actively assist the democratic processes in Russia, the economic reforms, and the strengthening of friendly, equitable relations between our peoples," a statement by Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk reads. "The close interweaving of the historical destiny and cultural traditions of the two fraternal peoples gives us grounds for appealing to the sides in the conflict to recognize the need to abandon confrontational approaches to settling the crisis. They must be based on the principle of respect for authority. We cannot agree to the nationally elected president and the legislature seeking to deprive each other of the functions of power without consulting with the people."

Tallinn—Juri Luik, leader of the Estonian delegation at the Russian-Estonian talks, declared that internal changes in Russia must not interrupt the talks between Russia and Estonia.

Tbilisi—At a meeting with local and foreign journalists on 21 March, Eduard Shevardnadze emphasized Georgia's position on the situation in Russia.

In Shevardnadze's opinion, the center of imperial thinking of the former USSR has shifted to the Russian parliament.

Shevardnadze declared that Russian President Boris Yeltsin's appeal to the Russian people is a perfectly correct and necessary step, albeit a somewhat belated one.

Speaking on Georgian national radio, Shevardnadze said: "The situation in Russia is dramatic. In the final analysis, everything will be determined by the strength of Yeltsin's authority and popularity among the Russian people. I believe that the majority of the population supports Yeltsin, who was legitimately elected by the people.... It is hard to speak of ideal leaders, but I believe that there is no alternative to Yeltsin in Russia now."

Shevardnadze did not rule out the possibility of military interference by the Russian Army in the conflict between the Russian powers, since, according to him, there is an extremely large number of both democratically minded and reactionary officers in the Russian Army. "Against the background of power in chaos, Russia's Army could become ungovernable," Shevardnadze said.

He also added that if a civil war begins in Russia, the world will be dealing with a new role for NATO, of which Bush spoke. According to Shevardnadze, in this case NATO could play a historic role.

The head of Georgia once again supported President Yeltsin: "We have an interest in seeing Russia headed by someone who understands that the policy of the Russian Supreme Soviet can lead Russian policy in relations with certain countries into an impasse."

'Possible Confrontation' Emerges

PM2403115393 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 24 Mar 93 First Edition pp 1, 2

[Irina Ovchinnikova report "based on reports from news agencies, and also IZVESTIYA correspondents Arnold Pushkar (Ryazan), Viktor Kostyukovskiy (Kemerovo), Mikhail Ovcharov (Yaroslavl), Sergey Krayukhin (St. Petersburg), and Vladimir But (Rostov-na-Donu)": "President Is Entitled To Find Out What the People Think of Him"]

[Text] While the president's address has not prompted any tense events in the country, the reaction to it by the Supreme Soviet, the Constitutional Court, and certain local organs of power is capable of fueling the situation. That is evident from the reports of IZVESTIYA correspondents and news agencies, but it is shown most of all by the flood of telegrams from individuals.

Probably most of them have reflected the viewpoint of Vladimir Chuba, head of administration in Rostov Oblast, who regards Boris Yeltsin's step as a manifestation of personal courage: No one has the right to forbid the president from raising the question of confidence in himself.

It is this position that the Yaroslavl Oblast Inner Soviet and Administration emphasize in their decision, supporting the decision on a nationwide vote "as the only possible method of solving the political crisis that has emerged by civilized means in today's situation." The people's deputies of Buryatia, the Samara Oblast Soviet Inner Soviet, and the Novgorod City Inner Soviet have greeted the president's address in precisely the same way. At a meeting with journalists Russian People's Deputy V. Ryumin, mayor of Ryazan, said that after the Eighth Congress, with its unbridled antipresidential campaign, it has become clear once and for all that procommunist and other extremist forces headed by the Supreme Soviet chairman are impatient to seize power even at the price of the disintegration of Russia. After many calls for accord and sense, the president was left with no choice but to address the people.

A. Vladislavlev, one of the leaders of "Civic Union," stated in an interview with the ITN TV company: "There can be no doubt that Yeltsin's actions are constitutional. The referendum must reveal the mood among the people and show how the population sees him. No one can be opposed to this."

The consultative council of Kuzbass parties and movements totally supported the measures to restore constitutional order in Russia announced by the president. The council believes that the Seventh and Eighth Congresses of People's Deputies violated the basic principles and fundamental provisions of the constitution. By rescinding its own decision on holding a referendum, the Congress of People's Deputies deprived the people of the opportunity to express their opinion. The measures being taken by the president have nothing in common with dictatorship, but pursue the aim of barring the way to a return to communist dictatorship.

A fund in support of the president has been set up in Kemerovo, on the initiative of a great number of representatives of industrialists, the intelligentsia, and business circles. Workers committees and the Independent Miners Union have decided to support the fund.

Telegrams adopted at meetings of labor collectives are arriving at the editorial office. Here is the opinion of staffers of the Noyabrskoye industrial transport administration: "'Zapsibneftestroy' condemns the Supreme Soviet's actions to destabilize the situation in the country. We urgently ask that the actions of the president and the government be supported."

Here is the decision of a ship's meeting on the motor ship Kola, which was circulated to all ships: "The Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, which was unprecedented in its cynicism and lack of culture, showed that the people's elected representatives are reluctant to consider their people's opinion, denying them the constitutional right to free expression of their will. The choice of society's path of development must belong to the people, not to the Congress."

Here is a telegram from Captain of Justice V. Siganov, an investigator from Yekaterinburg: "The power of the president of Russia elected by nationwide vote is more legitimate that the ochlocratic Congress of People's Deputies."

Doctor of Juridical Sciences Prof. Aleksey Tsvetinovich, the well known Kemerovo legal specialist, assesses the position of the Constitutional Court chairman as unprofessional. He thinks that V. Zorkin has himself destroyed the organ he heads. "I have never been able to imagine a judge who, on a case that is sub judice, ventures to express an opinion before the hearing. By expressing that opinion in the Supreme Soviet and on television, the chairman deprived the Constitutional Court of the ability to arbitrate in the conflict between branches of power. Now only the people can resolve this conflict."

Although, judging by reports from local level, the people are not yet succumbing to provocative calls and are working and preparing for the spring sowing, signs of possible confrontation are unfortunately appearing in some places. They are being prompted by mutually exclusive decisions by soviet and administrative organs. Thus, alarmed by the statement by the Kemerovo Oblast Inner Soviet (IZVESTIYA has reported it), the activists of the workers movement have noted that it may have an extremely negative impact on the state of the political situation in the Kuzbass: "By repealing the president's edicts and the government's decisions on the oblast's territory, the Inner Soviet has effectively declared an action of civil disobedience." "We declare," the document adopted by the council of representatives of the Independent Miners Union and the council of workers committees of the Kuzbass says, "that if the referendum is thwarted or the president is impeached we reserve the right to take more resolute action than a warning strike."

St. Petersburg Rally for Yeltsin

LD2303201693 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report from St. Petersburg by correspondents Sergey Dukhavin and Vladimir Zhuravlev, including recording of speech at rally by Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] [Announcer] It is clear that it is not only the Parliament and the Kremlin that are currently engaged in the dispute about how the constitution is being observed and by whom. More and more statements keep coming in from Russian towns and republics, expressing support for one side or the other. Thus, representatives of the local soviets support the Parliament, overwhelmingly coming out against the president's actions, whereas executive authorities do not approve of the actions of the Constitutional Court and the Parliament.

It is, however, very difficult to judge what most rank-and-file voters think. The public committee of Russia's democratic forces today called on all citizens to take part in the national campaign in support of the president. Now let us go over to our correspondents' despatches from major industrial centers to hand.

[Dukhavin] The Dvortsovaya Square has seen numerous rallies over the past 18 months, but as far as the number of participants is concerned, today's rally can only be compared to one other rally, that of 20 August 1991, when tens of thousands of inhabitants of this city assembled here to make their voice heard in defense of democracy. Just as on that memorable day, the people of Petersburg were unanimous in their support for the president, the government, and their legitimate right to take part in a referendum.

[Sobchak] We support the president and his actions. We support the government. We support the implementation, the policy of implementing economic and political reforms. We are in favor of extricating Russia by lawful means from the crisis that has arisen. It is both possible and necessary to extricate ourselves from this crisis. The president does offer us this way. Moreover, no one knows what the results of taking this path will be. This is because it is the people and they alone who will have the last word. If on 25 April our people at the referendum say yes to the president and yes to the democratic constitution he proposes, the possibility will then emerge of convening a constituent assembly, to adopt this new constitution and to hold re-elections to all bodies of power. Long live the reforms we have embarked upon, let us go forward into the future!

[Zhuravlev] Those assembled heard with ardent approval speeches by Galina Vishnevskaya and other artists, by a worker from the Kirov plant, and by representatives of the Democratic Russia movement. The rally's participants adopted a message in which they appealed to all the subjects of the federation, all Russian people, to come out as one in the struggle for a Russia that is undergoing a process of renewal, a democratic Russia. [video shows a well- attended rally, and posters reading "Khasbulatov back to Chechnya", "People's deputies, time to get back to the people again", "Yeltsin is better than those congress hacks", and "Boris Yes, Bulat (Khasbulatov) No"]

More on St. Petersburg Rallies

OW2303201393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1950 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Nearly 15,000 people came on Tuesday [23 March] to Dvortsovaya Square in St Petersburg to attend a rally in support for president Boris Yeltsin. They asserted that, the congress of people's deputies had set on foot a political crisis in the country. Also taking part in the rally were representatives of democratically-oriented parties, and the city powers-that-be.

St Petersburg Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak said in his speech, "We have gathered here today, just as in August 1991, because communists are again striving for power."

In their resolution, the participants of the rally denounced the stance taken by the RF [Russian Federation] Constitutional Court which, it reads, "condoned the disabling of the RF executive branch and the popularly elected president and has brought the country to the brink of a national disaster." The amendments to the RF Constitution have, in fact, suspended its action, the resolution says. Therefore, "The congress conferred on the president the right to take resolute measures for warding off Bolshevik dictatorship." Participants of the rally called on the residents in St Petersburg and on the people in Russia to struggle for the opportunity to express their will on April 5.

At the same time, about a thousand-strong crowd near Dvortsovaya Square in front of the General Staff Arch were demanding Boris Yeltsin's resignation. Analogous calls were flaunted by a picket of national radicals around the Aleksandr Column on Dvortsovaya Square.

During the meeting, according to an Interfax correspondent, there were several collisions during the rally which were put out by OMON [Special Purpose Militia Detachment] officers.

Moscow Rally Demands Resignation

LD2303232993 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2000 GMT 23 Mar 93

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] TASS reports that several hundred people who gathered under red banners outside Russia's House of Soviets for a regular rally today demanded that the president resign, that democrats be punished as criminals, and that teams of home guards should be set up to protect Soviet power. Posters with appeals "Away with justice which acts at the bidding of Zionists and Masons" and "Make public the genealogical, ethnic, and religious affiliation of media leaders" were hung on the building.

Moscow Centrists for Yeltsin's Dismissal

OW2303202093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1950 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Change-New Policy centrist faction of the Moscow Council feels that the situation in the country, despite all its complications, has not provided the Russian president with a basis for introducing special rule.

A statement adopted by the faction Tuesday [23 March] evaluates Yeltsin's appeal to the people as "an attempt at a state coup, directed at freeing the executive powers from any control." Change-New Policy is urging the Russian Supreme Soviet, the Constitutional Court, and the Congress of People's Deputies to immediately consider the issue "of dismissing the president from office and adopting measures to swiftly put an end to the monopoly on information in state television and radio broadcasts."

Majority of Muscovites Back Yeltsin

LD2303182793 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By commentator M.Taki; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] On 22 March, the Moscow branch of the All-Russia Center for the Study of Public Opinion carried out a survey in the capital in connection with the latest political events within the country. The 1,100 respondents represented all the main social and demographic groups in the adult population of Moscow. The poll showed that 63 percent of Muscovites do, in general, support the president's latest actions; 18 percent are against Yeltsin's position on principle; 19 percent of respondents found it hard to give an answer. The holding of nationwide elections to the Russian parliament now is also supported by 63 percent of Muscovites, with 18 percent against, and 19 percent finding it hard to reply.

In answer to the question: Would you, or would you not, now support a decision on the resignation of the president and the transferring of his powers to the vice president?, 65 percent of respondents said no, 20 percent would support such a decision, while 15 percent of Muscovites found it hard to say.

Chita Committee Backs Yeltsin, 25 Apr Vote

LD2403112793 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0735 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Fomin]

[Text] Chita March 24—A committee to support President Yeltsin has been formed in Chita. Its founders were representatives of Cossacks of the Lake Baykal region, local democratic movements, and also private citizens. The committee began to raise money to finance the April 25 voting. Democratic forces in Chita also plan to hold meetings of Yeltsin supporters and a city wide meeting in support of the Russian president.

Miners for Yeltsin; No Strike Planned

OW2303201993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1950 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Not a single Russian coal region is planning to strike for political reasons in the near future, nor are any mass actions involving miners planned. Ivan Mokhnachev, deputy chairman of the Independent Labor Union of Coal Workers, reported this to Interfax after a selective meeting of leaders of administrations and unions of coal industry enterprises, which was held Tuesday [23 March] by the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy.

"At present miners are more worried about problems involving the payment of subsidies, salaries, and mutual accounts," said Mokhnachev.

According to the meeting's participants, the majority of coal workers favor strengthening presidential power as such, while still maintaining a balance between the branches of power.

Miners Oppose Ninth Congress

LD2403102093 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 0900 GMT 24 Mar 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] The independent trade union of the Kuzbass and the council of work committees are opposed to holding yet another extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies of Russia. In the view of leaders of the workers' movement, the congress of deputies will be able to pursue the sole objective of removing Boris Yeltsin from his post. It has therefore been decided to organize centers at the region's coal enterprises to drum up support for the president. If there is an attempt to impeach the president, the miners reserve the right to take actions more decisive than a strike.

Tatar Leader for Referendum

OW2403111593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1056 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Tatarstan's President Mintimer Shaymyev believes that Russian President Boris Yeltsin has the right to address the people and to pose the question of confidence in the president. In his interview with ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA he emphasized that he sees nothing bad in this and it is necessary to create all conditions so that the president could hold a referendum.

At the same time, Shaymyev holds an opposite point of view with respect to other issues which Boris Yeltsin intends to present at the April 25 referendum, namely about basic principles of the constitution and about the federal parliament. In Shaymyev's words, these issues should be discussed following thorough preparation.

Shaymyev also believes that the proposal about introduction of direct presidential rule does not concern regions and republics. We lived, are living, and will live according to our own constitution, he underlined in his interview.

Mentioning several statements saying that the constitutional crisis in Russia could spawn separatist tendencies in the regions and republics within the Russian Federation, Tatarstan's president pointed out that he adheres to the following position: Whatever happens in Moscow, we stand for the integrity of the Russian Federation.

Chelyabinsk Official Criticizes Yeltsin

LD2403035993 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report by correspondent Sergey Sergeyev; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] Today, as in the last few days, the situation in Chelyabinsk is calm. All industrial enterprises and offices are working and there is order on the streets. Yesterday, here in the center of town, on Revolution Square, a rally was held under red banners organized by the oblast committees of political movements and parties of the communist persuasion. Posters produced during these last few days by the oblast committee in defense of the Constitution of Soviet power have been pasted around town.

Members of the lower soviet gathered for an emergency session.

All kinds of opinions were voiced about Boris Yeltsin's appeal to the citizens of Russia. But the majority of them described the president's moves as ill-considered and capable of causing the gravest consequences for the regions and for the republic as a whole.

[Begin Chelyabinsk Oblast Soviet Chairman P. Sumin recording] The Constitution of the Russian Federation and the laws of the Russian Federation, and no special administration, will operate on the territory of Chelyabinsk Oblast. [end recording]

A meeting between Vladimir Solovyev, the head of the Chelyabinsk Oblast administration, and journalists was held today. It also discussed Boris Yeltsin's appeal to the citizens of Russia.

[Begin Solovyev recording] This is a law of a president elected by the Russian people. He is in power today and he is acting within the bounds of the Constitution, although we have, in principle, a Constitution inherited from Brezhnev. I fully support this appeal and all the appraisals contained in it, and I profoundly share in my heart the alarm that is contained in these words. [end recording]

Anti-Yeltsin Meeting in Volgograd

PM2303203193 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 24 Mar 93 First Edition pp 1-2

[Report by Valeriy Kornev: "Even Before Yeltsin's Appeal to the People Preparations Were Under Way To Remove Him"]

[Text] Volgograd—Even before the president made his appeal a general action program had been adopted at the oblast constituent conference of the Russian National Union [Rossiyskiy Obshchenarodnyy Soyuz] attended by People's Deputy Nikolay Pavlov.

On the afternoon of 20 March, before the president's speech, an oblast constituent conference of the Russian National Union [RNU] was held in Volgograd. Russian Federation People's Deputy Nikolay Pavlov, cochairman of the RNU, came specially to attend it. I gave both his titles, since in his program speech Pavlov brought together the results of the Eighth Congress and the program for the opposition's future actions. The point is that irrespective of the president's reaction to the Congress decisions, the opposition still intended to attain its planned objective and get the provinces to rise up against the president and the reforms.

In the foyer of the former CPSU Oblast Committee House of Political Enlightenment the conference participants were offered a wide selection of national-patriotic and communist publications. Special prominence was given to the issue of the paper DEN, already discussed by IZVESTIYA (No 46), with a large photograph of German prisoners on the streets of Moscow, bearing the caption: "That is what will happen to the democrats."

The national-patriots and communists demonstrated close cohesion and a willingness to take joint action. There were leaders of the oblast organization of the reborn Russian Federation Communist Party and members of the oblast soviet communist faction in the hall. They actively participated in devising the joint program, which was set out in the resolutions adopted at the conference.

I am not going to comment on the abundance of well known expressions that appeared in the speeches, such as "an ignoble war is being waged against the Russian people" and "the president and his entourage are criminals." I will dwell on the key points in Pavlov's speech.

"We have never trusted the president and we are not going to start now," he said. "We demand Yeltsin's resignation." "The Eighth Congress made a mistake, the Congress should have raised the question of the president's removal." I must point out that this was said before Boris Yeltsin's appeal to the citizens of Russia, and it was said as if the opposition, rather than the people, had the right to decide the country's fate.

The assessment of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet chairman's actions was interesting. "Khasbulatov knows," the RNU cochairman said, "that as soon as Yeltsin is removed, it will be his turn next."

As for "Democratic Russia" and the other democratic parties and movements, the position of one of the opposition's leaders was categorical: "They must be taken out of political life, there is no and can be no place for them in the organs of power."

"We will work with the RNU," Yuriy Galochkin, secretary of the Volgograd Russian Federation Communist Party organization oblast committee, said, "since despite the different approaches there is even more that unites us. We must not allow our factories and plants to be transferred to the comprador bourgeoisie and our land to be sold off through privatization."

The resolution on Pavlov's speech determines the forms and methods of struggle. There is the switch from sporadic to systematic work in labor collectives and educational establishments. And also the creation of factions and groups in soviets at all levels. It was announced at the conference that Russian Federation People's Deputy Mikhail Kharitonov, former secretary of the CPSU Oblast Committee, had set about forming a "Russia" faction in the Volgograd Oblast Soviet. There is also extensive agitation and propaganda work, including "explanation of Yeltsin's antipeople policy."

The resolution on the attitude toward the Eighth Congress voices full support for its decisions. There is a demand for the immediate adoption of a law on control of the media.

But what do you think of the pronouncements by Nikolay Pavlov, who is one of the opposition's leaders? "Yeltsin is the tool and instrument of antinational and anti-Russian forces. People are mistaken if they expect to sit the struggle out. No one will be saved as long as the cannibalistic plans are in operation." Pavlov also announced the name of the presidential candidate. "We will nominate Baburin."

The publications made available at the conference included the newspaper VREMYA, published by the RNU and the "Russia" deputies' faction. An appeal in the usual national-patriotic style talks about the "temporary occupation of our homeland made possible by the traitors who seized key posts in our state's economy and ideology, defense and policy." Note the following appeals: "There is nowhere to retreat to—behind us is the homeland, in front of us is the enemy. Our cause is a just one! The enemy will be routed."

The same paper carries under the meaningful "Opposition Textbook" rubric, drily worded practical advice for regional organizations "on improving the structure." Here is one piece of advice: "The effectiveness of any structure is determined not only by its ability to conduct, say, a competent, well organized campaign for election to the organs of power, but also by its ability, if necessary, to deliver a proper and equally well organized rebuff." "To any Russian with any sense the words 'democracy' and 'treachery' will always be synonymous."

In the present situation, Oleg Beletskiy, cochairman of the Volgograd voters' committee, said, expressing his opinion on the latest events, the Russian president is adopting valid, essential measures. There is indeed a very great danger of party nomenklatura revenge and the reforms are in jeopardy. The attempted charges against the president of usurping power and violating the constitution, made by opposition representatives who have flouted this constitution on more than one occasion, conceal their true intention—to remove the nationally elected president on any pretext.

Cossacks 'To Serve' President

OW2403115693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1055 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Union of Russia's Cossack Troops expressed its full support for the president.

On March 23, it sent a letter to Boris Yeltsin expressing readiness to serve the Fatherland and the democratically elected president, to join the ranks of Russia's defenders and to support the people and its leader in a time of trials.

"Those who killed our fathers and grandfathers, are struggling for power again, driven by the desire to take revenge and unleash bloodshed, and to parasitize on the people for centuries," says the Cossack atamans' letter. "The Cossacks will not allow themselves to be turned into a weapon of the communist nomenklatura. Nor will they yield to the mendacious assurances of the communists who annihilated 100 million Russian citizens."

Media, Economic, & Other Issues

Yeltsin Issues Decree on Media Stability

LD2303190693 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1730 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Decree by President Boris Yeltsin "On guaranteeing balanced information and requirements in television and radio broadcasting," issued in Moscow on 22 March]

[Text] [no dateline as received] Bearing in mind Russia's upcoming entry into the Council of Europe and the need to guarantee balanced information during economic and constitutional reform and to ensure a responsible information policy in a democratic society, I resolve:

1. The attached minimum standard of requirements for television and radio broadcasting will be established.

The federal state television and radio companies and the territorial television and radio companies, financed from the federal budget, will be asked to be guided by the minimum standard of television and radio broadcasting requirements.

2. The Council of Ministers-Russian Government, together with the Russian Federal Information Center, will form within one month a working group comprising representatives of ministries and departments concerned, television and radio companies (including territorial ones), journalists' unions and organizations, scientists and experts in the field of mass information media and means of communication to ensure that Russian people's deputies participate in the working group.

3. The working group's main tasks include:

—drafting proposals on reorganizing the Russian television and radio broadcasting system to create a competitive system of state, public, and private television and radio;

—drafting proposals on reorganizing the system for financing television and radio to create a competitive system of television and radio broadcasting;

—drafting a package of draft laws on television and radio broadcasting.

4. In drafting laws, the working group should provide for the preparation of the draft laws regulating:

—a procedure for setting up and operating a federal commission for television and radio broadcasting and regional commissions for television and radio broadcasting stipulated by Article 30 of the Russian law "on the mass information media";

—a procedure for licensing conventional, wire, and cable television and radio broadcasting;

—the activity of state television and radio;

—the activity of public television and radio;

—the activity of private television and radio;

—a procedure for using television and radio broadcasting in election campaigns, as well as in campaigns for holding referendums;

—advertising and sponsorship in television and radio;

—a procedure for creating and using teletext and videotext systems;

—a procedure for creating and using cable television systems;

—a procedure for creating and using systems of wire television and radio broadcasting.

5. Russia's "Ostankino" state television and radio company and the "Russia" federal television and radio broadcast service must within one week confirm their list of informational programs and subsections.

Ban Russia's "Ostankino" state television and radio company and the "Russia" federal television and radio broadcast service from reorganizing and removing information programs and subsections, as well as the creation and functioning of organizational structures and posts whose functions and competence cover censorial control of information programs and subsections, until the adoption of a law regulating the activities of state television and radio broadcasts. [sentence as received]

Officials in whose functions and competence falls within professional control over the content of information programs cease membership of the organs running political parties and movements. [sentence as received]

To recognize as inadmissible the extension of the list of state bodies and officials, above named in the Law of the Russian Federation "On the mass media" and in the decrees of the president of the Russian Federation which are exercizing control over the information subdivisions, television programs, television and radio broadcasting, as well as appointments to the corresponding posts.

6. The Ministry of the Press and Information of the Russian Federation together with the Federal Information Center of Russia is to present draft provisions on the Russian state radio and television company 'Ostankino' and the federal television and radio broadcasting service 'Russia' to the president within two weeks.

In drawing up the draft provisions the creation is envisioned of supervisory councils which will have the function of resolving disputes arising from differences between political groups, from attempts at censorship or taking control of the mass media illegally, from violations of the provisions of point 5 of the present decree, of the constitutional right to seek out, obtain, and disseminate information, as well as disputes connected with the reorganization or elimination of television and radio news programs and subdivisions. To establish the obligation of the supervisory councils to appeal to the bodies of law and order to demand that officials from state bodies and organizations, officials from state bodies [as received] and public associations guilty of encroaching On the freedom of the mass media should be brought to account.

The Federal Information Center of Russia is to ensure that the supervisory councils receive the necessary assistance.

7. The Russian state TV and radio company 'Ostankino' and the Federal TV and radio broadcasting service 'Russia" are to present the president of the Russian Federation, within a two week deadline, with proposals, approved by the journalist collectives, concerning the composition of the supervisory councils.

Before a law regulating the activities of the state TV and radio broadcasting comes into force, the composition of the supervisory councils is endorsed by the president of the Russian Federation.

8. The state-legal directorate [as received] of the president of the Russian Federation and the "Yuridicheskaya Literatura" publishing house of the administration of the president of the Russian Federation are to ensure that the codex of acts by the president and the Government of the Russian Federation publishes the declaration on the mass information media and human rights (resolution 428/1970) of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and also the recommendations 748/1975 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and resolutions 820/1984 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation is to ensure within a two week deadline that the translation of the abovementioned documents into the Russian language is carried out in order to have them officially published.

[Signed] B. Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation, Moscow, the Kremlin, 20 March 1993

Further on Broadcasting Decree

LD2303211093 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1745 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Decree of the Russian president on guarantees of information stability and requirements with regard to television and radio broadcasting:

Sanctioned by decree of the President of the Russian Federation on 20 March 1993 No. 377

The Minimal Standards for Television and Radio Broadcasting

1. The information market

To give television viewers and radio listeners the possibility of choosing programs, taking account of regional, national, and other interests, though not necessarily within the framework of a single broadcast channel.

2. Freedom of opinion

To combine the freedom of expressing opinions with respect for the right to answer and to refute.

3. Fair presentation of information

To broadcast the most important information at the most convenient time for viewers and listeners, and to present various opinions, including opposing ones.

4. Balanced information

To avoid defending the interests of particular political groups and to exclude political pressure, lobbying, or control of information programs and subunits .

5. Professional responsibility

To regard a journalist's self-control and his responsibility for the reports and materials being prepared and issued as an indispensible professional requirement.

6. "Electronic ecology"

To reduce the informational "pollution" of television programs and to raise the standards of broadcasts' cultural level and educational potential.

7. Protection of integrity

To ensure protection of the integrity of works of art in television and radio programs, and prevent them from being broken up by advertisements.

8. Protection of information content

To ensure the separation of opinions from information and advertisements.

9. Guarantee of fairness

To bow to the moral authority of the supervisory council which is summoned to guarantee fairness and stability in the dissemination of television and radio information.

10. Principles of interaction

To be guided in their activity by:

"The declaration on the media and human rights" (resolution 428/1970 of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe);

Principles for managing television and radio broadcasting (recommendation 748/1975 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;

Principles for relations between the media and parliaments (resolution 820/1984 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe).

Fedorov on Presidential Decree on Press Protection

LD2403001093 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1749 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksey Agureyev]

[Text] Moscow March 23 TASS—The need for the Russian president decree on protection of mass media bodies was provoked by large-scale congress pressure on press, Russian Minister of Press and Information Mikhail Fedorov told ITAR-TASS today.

"An example of this is the draft 8th Congress resolution, planning to subordinate all state TV and radio companies and ITAR- TASS to the Supreme Soviet. This could be done only after canceling the Constitution, the law on mass media, the law on the Council of Ministers and so on," he said.

There are also cases of attempts to break into buildings of TV and radio companies, editor's offices of newspapers and magazines, which means mass media bodies need protection, said the minister. The ministry also knows about attempts to economically stifle mass media bodies with excessively high prices and tariffs on printing services, paper and rent.

"The presidential decree was prompted by the need to protect mass media bodies," notes the minister.

Yeltsin Decree on Responsibility of Officials

LD2303192893 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1721 GMT 23 Mar 93

["Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on the Responsibility of Officials of Executive Power in the Russian Federation"]

[Text] [No dateline as received] —For the purpose of increasing the responsibility of officials of executive power in the Russian Federation:

1. The chairman of the Council of Ministers—the government—of the Russian Federation and the head of the administration of the president of the Russian Federation should check, in a fortnight, the observance of the Russian Federation president's decrees and instructions, decisions and instructions of the Council of Ministers—the government—of the Russian Federation as well as the execution of duties by officials and make appropriate proposals.

2. Heads of executive power (presidents) in republics forming the Russian Federation, administration heads of krays, oblasts, autonomous oblasts, and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg should check, within a month, facts of non-fulfillment of their duties by officials (subordinated to them) of executive power and local administration, and take appropriate measures concerning their responsibility, informing the president of the Russian Federation about these measures.

As head of executive power in the Russian Federation, I warn officials of the executive power system who do not fulfill their duties and interfere with the implementation of legislative acts of the Russian Federation of their personal accountability to the president of the Russian Federation as well as other top leaders of executive power.

[Signed] President of the Russian Federation B. Yeltsin

Kozyrev on Presidential, Legislative Poll

MK2403102693 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Mar 93 pp 1, 2

[Interview with Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev by Dmitriy Voskoboynikov, INTERFAX diplomatic commentator, and Aleksandr Nadzharov, on 19 March en route from Helsinki to Moscow: " 'Presidential Dictatorship' Does Not Threaten Russia. Russian Federation Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev Talks About Domestic Policy"]

[Text] [NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] Andrey Vladimirovich, the debate is intensifying in the country over which form of power best answers Russia's needs. What is your opinion?

[Kozyrev] I have no doubt that the sole model possible for Russia is strong presidential power. It differs from dictatorship in that it is based on a proper mandate, on honest nationwide elections. One cannot question the legitimacy of the current president.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] But what are the guarantees that strong presidential power will not grow into a dictatorship?

[Kozyrev] The guarantees for this are the maintenance of freedom of speech and fundamental human rights. As you can see, the president is acting as a guarantor of these freedoms, defending them from, among other things, encroachments by other branches of power. Yet another guarantee against dictatorship is the next elections, which must be held in conditions of fair competition. I am convinced that this is how it will be. It is precisely the presidency, relying on the people' mandate, that must break the inertia of a totalitarian state that is constantly overwhelming us.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] What historical parallels are you thinking about?

[Kozyrev] Countries that have already gone through the path of reforms have basically moved along the road of strong executive and presidential power. It is only now that they can afford a less centralized system.

The democracy of public rallies is nonviable at the stage of tough reforms and unpopular decisions, including economic ones. That was Gorbachev's trouble. Why could he not carry through the reforms even if he wanted to? Because he had no mandate from the people.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] But as long as the referendum is banned...

[Kozyrev] Ban the referendum? In my opinion this is something absolutely unheard of! What rule-of-law state can we be talking about if the people are deprived of the possibility to express their opinion on cardinal issues?! After all, another way of doing it is civil war.

It is absurd to suppose that the reforms of such a historical scope as ours can proceed without fundamental disagreements. However, there are only two methods of resolving such problems. The first is the "Soviet" one, in other words, use force and declare: "I am right and that's that!" The second option is a civilized one, presupposing voting by the people. Only Soviet democracy is capable of banning a referendum. I think that if it were not for the president, we would be on the verge of reviving the "world's most democratic" Soviet democracy.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] Do you think it is a good idea to hold presidential elections and elections of the executive branch simultaneously?

[Kozyrev] This is also one of the forms of referendum. There is nothing terrible about it. It seems to me, however, that it would be irresponsible to elect the deputy corps and the president at the same time. A period of chaos will ensue and administration control will be lost.

I am categorically against any talk to the effect that we are not ready for democracy, but just as extremist would be the following statement: "We are so accustomed to democracy that nothing is threatening us." At each turn we are threatened with the revival of totalitarianism.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] What is the way out then?

[Kozyrev] We can use such democratic methods as referendum or early elections, but this should be done without losing our head. True, reelections (especially insofar as these soviets are concerned) are rather an addition to a referendum, they do not replace it. Through referendum we resolve some fundamental constitutional questions and on the basis of this decision elect more civilized bodies of power. Elections themselves, however, could be brought forward—for example by a year. In the first year, elections of the deputy corps should be held; in the second, the election of the president.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] Are there any other reasons except for security that make you oppose the idea of simultaneous elections?

[Kozyrev] There is one. It is connected with the need for the formation of parties, the emergence of their political positions. Obviously, parties are not formed at press conferences and not by way of various declarations, even the most colorful ones. We, along with other like-minded people, have repeatedly discussed the possibility of forming a party to support the president, not necessarily headed by him. When we imagined, however, that once again another group of individuals would appear at a press conference and use the same old words to explain: "We are for a market economy; we are for democracy...," we gave it another thought.

As for elections, they are the setting where parties are formed and political positions identified. After a pre-election hangover the people could have some time to watch who and what stands behind them. And then, when the election struggle for the presidential post begins, it will be politically mature.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA] What are the relationships at present between the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Supreme Soviet?

[Kozyrev] I have two standing requests for the Supreme Soviet. The first one is that I be given an opportunity to address it not four to five times a year but more frequently, if possible. We are being told that we do not inform them, do not consult them. I keep asking all the time, however, to be given an opportunity to make a statement! The second request: I would like the deputies to do what is really necessary—put in place a legislative foundation and not spend their time on strange questions, for instance those related to Iraq.

For example, we need a law, an amendment to the citizenship law whereby Russian people living abroad, including in the former Soviet republics, could acquire dual citizenship. However, the Supreme Soviet, criticizing the foreign minister, for some reason or other cannot get down to discussing this issue.

Or here is another question—about the CIS. We have done our share of duty—coordinated a fairly good Commonwealth Charter. When he was in Minsk, Yeltsin made sure that it was approved in principle. The Charter, however, will only take effect after its ratification by the Supreme Soviets of the corresponding republics. If our Supreme Soviet is really concerned about the CIS, this document should be quickly—quickly but not hastily—ratified. But not only this—other parliamentarians should be influenced, too, including the Ukrainians, so that they too approve the Charter. If Ruslan Imranovich Khasbulatov dealt with this issue in Kiev, this is exactly what we are only dreaming about. [Kozyrev ends]

P.S. A. Kozyrev gave this interview last Friday on his way from Helsinki to Moscow. On Saturday Boris Yeltsin gave an address to the citizens of Russia. And on Sunday one of the authors of this item again met with the foreign minister and asked him to comment on the situation that had arisen. "The president is restoring legal order, harmonizing legality and the law," the minister said. "As usual, it is he who is risking—not someone else, but himself—and unlike the opposition, he is not trying to bar himself from the expression of the people's will. He goes directly to the people. Attempts to challenge the constitutionality of his decisions will discredit anybody who makes such attempts and will place him outside the context of contemporary legal consciousness."

Four Servicemen Convicted of Espionage

LD2403125493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1228 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By CRIME-PRESS correspondent Valeriy Litvinenko for TASS]

[Text] Moscow March 24 TASS—The court martial of the Moscow military district found four servicemen of the Russian Armed Forces guilty of treachery in the form of espionage for Western secret services and sentenced them to imprisonment in a maximum security jail on Monday [22 March].

The four collected and handed over to Western special services top secret information on the composition and armaments of military units and formations, as well as other information of interest for foreign intelligence, CRIME PRESS learned from the office of the Russian prosecutor general which gave no other details.

They servicemen were paid in hard currency for spying, it added.

The four pleaded guilty during the trial.

No Justice Ministry Confirmation on Fedorov's Resignation

LD2303093493 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0840 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Sergey Podyapolskiy]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Mar—The press service of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation is not yet able to confirm the report that appeared in the mass media that the head of the ministry Nikolay Fedorov has resigned. The ITAR-TASS correspondent was told by the apparatus of the government of the Russian Federation that no information at all on Nikolay Fedorov's resignation had reached it so far.

Official Confirms Minister's Resignation

OW2203210793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2036 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Head of the Justice Ministry's press service, Valeriy Zalmanov, confirmed an Interfax report Monday night that Justice Minister Nikolay Fedorov had resigned. Zalmanov did not explain, however, the reasons for this decision.

Earlier, reliable sources in the Kremlin had reported Fedorov's resignation, stating that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin planned to confirm it.

Fedorov Wants Central Bank Chairman Replaced

OW2303182393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1712 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian Vice-Premier Boris Fedorov sent the president, the government, and the Supreme Soviet a letter asking that the leadership of the Central Bank of Russia (CBR) be replaced. Fedorov said that "the CBR leadership systematically sabotages" government decisions. This jeopardizes Russian agreements with international finance organizations for conducting financial policy, said the vice-premier at a press conference in Moscow Tuesday.

According to Interfax information, on Tuesday Fedorov signed an order stating that beginning July 1 the interest rate of CBR refinancing on centralized credits will be set according to the rates on interbank credits on the free credit market and will be adjusted monthly.

Today the CBR has a credit rate of 80% annual interest - almost half the level of commercial bank interest rates.

According to the vice-premier, they also plan to control the rise in the dollar's market exchange rate to a limit of 3-5% a week by using "monetary and credit policy funds." Fedorov said that several documents are under examination, including one "on stopping technical credits" to former Soviet republics. This decision could go into effect in the near future and would operate until parliament adopts a resolution on the issue.

The vice-premier said that he sent the CBR leadership the demand to cancel the order to increase the equity capital of commercial banks. Fedorov also said the government is insisting that nonresidents be allowed into the domestic currency market, which would enable them to freely acquire Russian currency.

Fedorov emphasized that, taking into consideration the current political situation in Russia, "it would be advisable to change the location of the Russian-American summit" from Vancouver to Moscow. The vice-premier said that the issue "is currently under consideration."

Gerashchenko Opposes Fedorov's Attempts To Impose Policy

OW2303211893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1950 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Chairman of the Central Bank of Russia (CBR) Viktor Gerashchenko, commenting in an interview with Interfax on the attempts of the government committee on credit policy to "force decisions on the CBR," said, "I always favored coordinating activities with the government, but if coordination is to be implemented in this manner, then naturally nothing good will come of it." According to Gerashchenko, the quarterly limits on centralized crediting proposed by Vice Premier Fedorov, "were taken out of thin air." The CBR head also spoke against automatic increases in interest rates on centralized credits to commercial banks, which are now at 80% annual.

Discussing the possibility of allowing non-residents to enter the Russian currency market, Gerashchenko said that the bank's leadership "has definite doubts" on this point. He feels the problem should be resolved with consideration for the program of privatization and attracting foreign investment to Russia. The CBR chairman said he believed there should now be several exchange rates for the ruble to the dollar.

"But then this is an old dispute both between people in our country and with the IMF representatives," said Gerashchenko.

Ministries Criticize Decree Freeing Oil Firms

OW2303182493 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1713 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Numerous Russian Ministries have criticized presidential decree No. 374, signed by Yeltsin March 19. Oil and gas producing, geological survey, and oil refining industries are no longer required to sell part of their hard-currency earnings for deliveries of oil and gas condensate and the products of their refining.

According to Interfax sources, when the decree was discussed, Andrey Nechayev, Economy Minister, said that this decree will undermine the currency market and force the ruble to plunge still deeper against the dollar. He was supported by Sergey Glazyev, Foreign Trade Minister, who feared that "this decision will not only undermine the formation of a currency market but also remove the incentive to buy oil producing equipment on the domestic market."

Regional Affairs

Cossacks Declare Self-Government in Rostov

LD2403125693 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1109 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vyacheslav Bondarenko]

[Text] Rostov-na-Donu, 23 Mar—The political situation in Don has sharply deteriorated. Last night, the Grand Assembly of Cossacks declared the oblast of the Don Host a state—territorial subject of the Russian Federation. A provisional Cossack leadership was created and Cossack self-government was declared.

Irkutsk Oblast Objects to Governor's Dismissal

LD2403122293 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 24 Mar 93

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] The Irkutsk oblast soviet has confirmed the head of the administration there, Yuriy Nozhikov, in his post, despite his removal by Boris Yeltsin for breaches of legislation.

Tens of thousands of people in Irkutsk oblast have voiced their disapproval of the Russian president's decision to remove the administration head, Yuriy Nozhikov. It is to Nozhikov, an active supporter of the reforms and a bold defender of the oblast's interests, that the locals link their hopes for change for the better.

[Begin V. Ignatenko recording, identified by caption as chairman of Irkutsk oblast soviet] Because of this, the oblast soviet is holding an evening session today. Unfortunately, we still do not know on what legal grounds the oblast governor has been removed from his duties. [apparent break in video continuity] My fear is that removing him at this moment is intended to serve some political purpose. [end recording]

State of Emergency Continues in Ingushetia, North Ossetia

LD2303160693 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1239 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[Text] Vladikavkaz March 23 TASS—According to reports received from the interim administration's headquarters here, units of the joint armed forces, deployed in the Ingush-Ossetian conflict area are continuing efforts to enforce the state of emergency regime. Thirteen people were arrested during the past twenty-four hours for violating the curfew and state of emergency regulations. Eleven crimes and other offences were registered. About 4,000 motor vehicles were checked, as well as nine arriving and departing airliners. Seven trains were searched on the stations of Vladikavkaz, Beslan and Nazran. No prohibited objects were found.

A gang of unidentified men opened submachine-gun fire on an army checkpoint on Monday near the Ordzhonikidzovskaya station in the Sunzhen District of the Ingush Republic. The post had to retaliate. None of the attackers were captured. There were no casualties among the armymen. Five arsons were registered during the same period in the Yuzhniy Leninsky district of Northern Ossetia.

The Russian Interior Ministry's investigation team has established the whereabouts of six Ingushis, former residents of Vladikavkaz and the Prigorodny District of North Ossetia, who were reported missing in December 1992.

ITAR-TASS was told by officials of the Presidium of the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet that a session of the soviet would be convened on March 24. It will discuss the results of the fifth round of Kislovodsk talks between the official delegations of North Ossetia and Ingushetia on measures to resolve the problem of refugees and people forced to resettle on the territories of the two republics.

Igushetia's Aushev To Insist on Russian Troop Withdrawal

LD2403095093 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0737 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Mikhail Shevtsov]

[Text] Nazran March 24 TASS—Several Russian servicemen, blocked in the premises of the Interior Department on March 23, have been set free, a spokesman for the headquarters of the provisional administration in Ingushetia told ITAR-TASS last night. However, the situation in the republic continues to be complicated.

On March 23 the Ingush president sent an appeal to the Russian president, the defence and interior ministers of Russia not to prolong the state of emergency regime in the republic after March 31.

Ruslan Aushev told ITAR-TASS late on Tuesday night that he intended to insist on a complete pullout of Russian troops from Ingushetia. "The developments of the past several days made it clear to me that the Russian Army units and Interior Ministry troops should be pulled out immediately. The attitude of residents of the republic towards servicemen is extremely negative," Aushev said.

Aushev is going to hold an urgent meeting today in the morning with Alexander Kotenkov, head of the provisional administration in the state of emergency zone, and the commanders of Russian Army units deployed in Ingushetia. They will discuss measures to stabilise the situation.

To Convene Congress

OW2403115293 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1057 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Ingush president intends to convene the congress of representatives of the Ingush people for taking vitally important decisions on the basis of the public opinion, says the Ingush Republic's temporary law on the presidential powers for the transitional period. This period is defined as "the time between the election of president and the establishment of the supreme legislative body".

During this period, the president, a person privileged with complete immunity, shall be granted legislative and executive powers in all their entirety.

The temporary law also defines the size of the salary which is paid to the president from the state budget and which amounts to 15 minimal wages. The president and his family shall live in a state residence, whose maintenance is financed from the state budget.

The temporary law went into effect upon its approval by the extraordinary congress of the people of Ingushetia earlier this week.

'Aggravated' Situation in Ingush Republic

LD2303222593 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2048 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondent Mikhail Shevtsov]

[Text] Nazran March 23 TASS—The situation in the Ingush Republic has aggravated over the past three days.

An APC [armored personnel carrier] driven by a Russian officer knocked down a car, killing one person and contusing the other, on March 21 in the area of a check point.

This noon a Russian officer opened fire at a car, whose driver did not abide by his order to stop. Two persons were wounded as a result.

A staffer of the local law-enforcement bodies and a pedestrian were wounded under unclarified circumstances in Nazran in the area of the Interior Department this evening.

Several Russian servicemen are kept hostage by an outraged crowd. Ingush President Ruslan Aushev is doing his best to stabilize the situation together with the Russian Troops Command and the temporary administration in the state of emergency zone.

Ingushetia Seeks Postponement of Republic Election

OW2303191193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In Ingushetia the Emergency Congress of Peoples has called on President Ruslan Aushev to ask the Russian Parliament to put off the election to the republic's legislature from April 11, as decided earlier by the Presidium of Russia's Supreme Soviet.

A resolution adopted by the Congress says that it is desirable to put off the election "until frontiers are established and because socioeconomic problems must be urgently solved."

International Affairs

Crimean Politicians Split on Yeltsin's Stance

OW2303202193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1950 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Leader of the Crimean Social Democratic Union Anatoliy Filatov told an Interfax correspondent that he supports the position of Russian president Boris Yeltsin. He feels that the Russian Supreme Soviet and the Congress of People's Deputies personify "the incompetence of the Soviet form of power, which always protected the corporative interests of the communist nomenclature."

In turn, Chairman of the Union of Communists of the Crimea Leonid Grach said that the constitutional crisis in Russia today emerged as a result of the unchecked attempts of Boris Yeltsin "to usurp power." In an interview with Interfax he warned that the recent events in Russia "could spell trouble for the entire CIS." Grach feels that in this situation Yeltsin must change his stance and resign, although Grach does not think this is likely. Barring that, he proposed forming a coalition government.

Democratic Party Urges Kravchuk-Yeltsin Cooperation

OW2303182693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1714 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Democratic Party of Ukraine published a statement on Monday [22 March] urging President Leonid Kravchuk to clearly state his position on the recent events in Russia and "intensify his cooperation with President Boris Yeltsin in order to overcome the difficulties that our peoples face." The Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet have become the "strongholds" of Russia's reactionary forces, the statement says.

The party warns that the recent developments in Russia will have a negative effect on the political situation in Ukraine, "stimulating the activity of the pro-imperial and communist forces," something that is already in evidence in parliament, and in such regions as the Crimea and the Donets Basin, where pro-communist groups have lately been increasingly active.

The Democratic Party, having a membership of several thousand, is a member organization of the Congress of National Democratic Forces. It essentially supports the President and opposes the republic's membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Foreign Minister Heads to U.S. for START I Talks

LD2303155893 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0926 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Mar—Meeting and setting up contacts with the new administration is the prime objective of an official visit to the United States by Ukraine Foreign Minister Anatoliy Zlenko, which starts today. He has stated this in an interview with the POSTFACTUM agency.

The minister also intends to brief the U.S. secretary of state on the progress which has been made so far with the preparatory work on the ratification of the START I Treaty. Zlenko does not rule out that military-political issues will also be discussed, along with economic and political problems. He does not intend to conceal that the idea of ratifying the START I Treaty as a first step, while not rushing to sign the Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Treaty until it has been fully studied, has recently become popular with Ukraine's people's deputies. The minister thinks that if this idea is realized, it will provoke negative reaction from the West.

During his visit, Zlenko also intends to meet the UN secretary general to discuss the problem of UN sanctions against Yugoslavia.

Further on Zlenko's U.S. Visit

OW2303175193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1714 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [23 March] morning the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatoliy Zlenko went on a 3-day official visit to the United States.

He is scheduled to meet with the U.S. State Secretary Warren Christopher, Defense Minister Les Aspin, senators, and congressmen.

Zlenko will conduct a press conference in Washington at the end of his visit.

The head of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry also intends to meet with the U.N. General Secretary Butrus Butrus-Ghali.

The day before Zlenko reported to journalists in Kiev that he would inform Washington on preparation process to ratify the START-1 Treaty by the Ukrainian parliament.

According to Zlenko, Ukraine will present to the American party several issues which appeared during the discussion of the START-1 Treaty in the parliament's commissions.

The majority of deputies stand in favor of more reliable guarantees of Ukraine's nuclear security and increasing of compensations for Ukraine's expenditures caused by the liquidation of nuclear missiles; the deputies intend to put forward these demands to the U.N. Security Council member-countries. The minister noted that the American aid allocated for these purposes and totalling $176 Mn is inadequate.

During his meeting with Butrus-Ghali, Zlenko also intends to ask the world community to allocate funds in order to compensate the damages inflicted to Ukraine as a result of fulfilling the U.N. sanctions against Yugoslavia.

Objectives of Khasbulatov's Kiev Visit Scrutinized

AU2303154393 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 20 Mar 93 p 1

[Report by Anatoliy Kraslyanskyy: "Impressions Near the Gangway"]

[Text] The visit to Kiev by R. Khasbulatov, chairman of the Russian Supreme Council, startled many politicians as soon as it was announced. Had the visit taken place earlier—prior to the congress [of people's deputies in Moscow]—it probably would not have drawn so much attention. However, the events in Moscow are still fresh in our memory....

What exactly is behind this trip? Is this an attempt by Khasbulatov to show that from now on he alone and no one else represents Russia in CIS countries? A striving to find supporters among closest neighbors? Could this also be his first steps on the road toward restoring the Union?

Who knows? Variants of such questions could be multiplied. One thing is clear: Politicians of such rank do not make accidental trips.

This is what Khasbulatov said about his visit as soon as he descended the gangway after the visit to Belarus:

"It is a working visit by the head of the Russian Supreme Council to his colleagues. We will discuss various questions associated with our situation and bilateral relations and how to improve these ties. We will also discuss CIS problems...."

"What will you say," we asked the speaker of the Russian parliament, "about the fact that some politicians suspect that you want to import Russian events to Kiev?"

"Oh well," answered Khasbulatov, "even prior to the congress, I announced that after its work is completed, I would be traveling to CIS countries. The point is that due to the lack of time, I am unable to properly fulfill the functions associated with the work of the interparliamentary assembly. It is necessary to visit and hold discussions."

The answer is exhaustive and, at the same time, diplomatically obscure. The true intentions of the head of the Russian parliament will become clear during his official meetings at Ukraine's Supreme Council.

Communique on Khasbulatov, Plyushch Negotiations

AU2303165193 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 20 Mar 93 p 1

["Communique on the Negotiations Between Parliamentary Delegations of the Russian Federation and Ukraine" issued in Kiev on 19 March]

[Text] On 19 March, in accordance with a mutual agreement, negotiations on a wide range of questions of intensifying bilateral relations were held between parliamentary delegations of the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

The delegation of the Russian Federation was headed by R.I. Khasbulatov, chairman of the Russian Supreme Council, and the Ukrainian delegation—I.S. Plyushch, chairman of Ukraine's Supreme Council.

A meeting took place between R.I. Khasbulatov and Ukrainian President L.M. Kravchuk.

The Ukrainian side was informed about the activity of the Russian Supreme Council, the results of the Eighth Congress of People's Deputies, and the work of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly.

Particular attention was given to discussing the internal political situation in both states.

The sides confirmed their adherence to parliamentarism as a foundation for the democratic development of states.

Striving to fully implement the desire of their peoples and respecting their decision as independent and sovereign states to develop relations of fraternal friendship and good neighborly relations, and taking into account the significance of cooperation between the two states, the sides confirmed their mutual interest in using an interparliamentary dialogue to promote favorable development of bilateral relations between Russia and Ukraine. Guided by the principles of international law and mutual interests, the sides confirmed their readiness to hold negotiations on the basis of already existing bilateral agreements and those reached within the framework of the CIS.

The sides discussed the course of implementing previously signed bilateral agreements and decided to continue work on creating a legal basis that would ensure their implementation and the development of cooperation.

In discussing questions on economic cooperation, the sides paid particular attention to resolving financial-currency and financial-credit problems and regulating interbank relations and mutual settlements.

It was agreed that interparliamentary cooperation must be intensified and the possibilities of the Consultative Conference of Heads of Supreme Councils (Parliaments) of states that are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States more extensively used, as well as relations at the level of committees and commissions and work of the Interparliamentary Commission of the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

The situation of Russians in Ukraine and Ukrainians in Russia was discussed, including questions of citizenship and social protection of the population in conditions of the transition to market relations.

International issues that present mutual interest were discussed.

The Russian side expressed its satisfaction with Ukraine's intention to ratify START I.

The negotiations proceeded in the atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding. It was decided to continue the constructive practice of holding meetings of parliamentary delegations.

[Signed] R.I. Khasbulatov, chairman of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation and chairman of the Council of the Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS Countries
I.S. Plyushch, chairman of Ukraine's Supreme Council

[Dated] Kiev, 19 March 1993

Kazakh Prime Minister in Crimea on Official Visit

Promotes Exchange of Oil for Resort

OW2103123193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1637 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Saturday [20 March] the Kazakh Prime Minister Sergey Tereshchenko arrived in Simferopol. In the airport he reported to journalists that during his meeting with the Crimean leadership he intends to discuss several economic issues, and primarily, the prospects to use the Crimean health resorts so that Kazakhstan's citizens could rest there.

Nikolay Bagrov, the chairman of Crimea's Supreme Soviet, who was meeting the Kazakh Premier, reported to journalists that the Crimean parliament has not determined its position on this issue yet though it has conducted discussions of this problem. He promised that the session scheduled for March 24 will discuss the status of the Crimean health resorts. According to Bagrov, Crimea wants that "All-Union health resorts" situated in Crimea will belong to the Republic of Crimea but departmental health resorts should remain in the ownership of enterprises irrespective of the fact to which CIS state they belong. Bagrov underlined that he favors a closer cooperation between Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

The parties intend to discuss an issue concerning deliveries of Kazakh oil to the Crimea.

Tereshchenko spoke in favor of closer economic contacts within the CIS. In Tereshchenko's words, "the absence of demand for the production produced in our states on the world market forces us to do so."

Tereshchenko believes that now CIS states should give up a part of their sovereignty and to unite in order to solve common problems. The states, he says, should precisely determine their position with respect to the countries which have not signed CIS Charter. He declared that it is necessary to pursue a special economic policy towards these countries. "We should not sell grain and oil to everybody at equal prices," he said.

Talks With Kuchma

LD2203040793 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1820 GMT 21 Mar 93

[By UKRINFORM correspondent for TASS]

[Text] Simferopol, 21 Mar—At the invitation of the Ukrainian Government, Kazakhstani Prime Minister Sergey Tereshchenko went to Ukraine on a short working visit on 20-21 March. He held talks in Simferopol with Ukrainian Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma, during which they discussed in detail many problems related to further development and strengthening of economic, scientific, technical, and cultural ties between Ukraine and Kazakhstan. "Ukraine is a very important partner for us," Sergey Tereshchenko emphasized. He believes the economies of the two states can considerably complement each other.

Nikolay Bagrov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Crimean Republic, and Anatoliy Franchuk, first deputy chairman of the council of ministers of the Crimean Republic, took part in the talks between the prime ministers of Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

Government Sustains Single Loss in Clash with Parliament

PM2303150993 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 19 Mar 93 First Edition p 2

[Sergey Tsikora report: "Ukraine: Conservatives Tried To Organize a Government Crisis"]

[Text] Kiev—A kind of record was set for political aggressiveness on 17 March in the Ukrainian parliament. Deputies who hold conservative views made two attempts to create a government crisis during one sitting of the session.

The reason that was used was the legal hitch that "a people's deputy cannot exercise his powers as a deputy at the same time as occupying a post to which the president of Ukraine makes appointments." Clutching at this, the conservatives instructed the session to terminate the powers of all Ukrainian vice prime ministers recently appointed to L. Kuchma's government. Obviously this would cause a very profound government crisis.

The deputies who are ministers were faced with the choice: either to remain mere deputies, or to leave the government posts [as published]. Academician I. Yukhnovskyy, a first vice prime minister, preferred to remain a people's deputy. He declared this publicly from the Supreme Soviet rostrum. He was followed by I. Gerts, minister for foreign economic ties, who made the same announcement. Another four ministers made analogous statements.

Seeing the government falling apart before his very eyes, Supreme Soviet Chairman I. Plyushch referred to the incompleteness of the document being presented for the vote and withdrew it from further discussion.

But the conservatives' attempt to change the composition of the government in their own favor did not end there. Again they tried to get rid of some of the ministers who did not suit them during discussion of the question of the socioeconomic situation in Ukraine and government measures to stabilize it.

The cabinet of ministers nevertheless sustained some losses. A few hours after the events in the parliament, Ukrainian radio reported that President L. Kravchuk had signed an edict relieving First Vice Prime Minister I. Yukhnovskyy of his post. In connection with a transfer to a new job.

Turkish Police, Customs Officers Attack Ukrainian Ship

LD1903180093 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0853 GMT 19 Mar 93

[By UKRINFORM-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Odessa, 19 Mar—The bulk cargo ship "Margilan", which belongs to the "Vyetsovlikhter" joint enterprise, suffered a bandit-like attack involving the use of automatic weapons and was completely plundered while moored in the Turkish port of Mersin. This was reported today in a telegram by the ship's capitain, N. Chebotarenko. According to his report, this action was carried out by local customs and police officers. Three people were injured. Twenty crew members are in jail. A commission from the Black Sea maritime shipping company has been sent to Turkey to establish the circmstances of what has happened.

National Affairs

Presidential Commission on Nuclear Policy Set Up

LD2303120993 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 0800 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Leonid Kravchuk, president of Ukraine, has approved the regulations for a Commission for Issues of Nuclear Policy. The main tasks of this advisory body under the president include: the preparation of recommendations to the president as regards drafting of state nuclear policy and its implementation, including in the military sphere; analysis of drafts of enforceable enactments on the utilization of nuclear energy; studies of concepts and development programs of the nuclear power engineering complex for compatibility with international requirements and norms; studies of new designs and technical decisions in the utilization of nuclear energy, including international projects which are of importance to Ukraine, and the elaboration of corresponding propositions on this basis.

Crimean Nuclear Munitions Dump 'Declassified'

AU2303213093 Kiev MOLOD UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 19 Mar 93 p 1

[Unattributed report published under the rubric "Fact"]

[Text] In the Crimea, not far from Sudak, within the Kyzyltash preserve that last century's travelers called a second Switzerland, Black Sea Fleet mariners made a nuclear munitions dump. For more than 40 years, this facility was not marked on any maps or reference books used by civilians. At last, the picturesque preserve has been declassified and opened for tourists and scientists.

New Municipal Police Created in Transcarpathia

AU2303214093 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 18 Mar 92 p 4

[Vasyl Babukh report: "The Guards of Order Are Carrying Out a Patrol"]

[Text] Slim and fit young men in dark blue uniforms and with corresponding ammunition have appeared in the streets of Kosov. These are patrols of the guards of order that form a subdivision of the rayon's newly created municipal police. The police is financed from the local budget. The guards recently swore allegiance to Ukraine.

Crimean Communist Group Formed

LD2403040393 Kiev UKRINFORM in Russian 1543 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By UKRINFORM correspondent Lev Ryabchikov for TASS]

[Text] Simferopol, 23 Mar—The Communists of Crimea have decided to grant their union a party status. The rules of the party—the Union of Communists of Crimea—were adopted and a republican committee [reskom] elected at the constituent conference. The republican committee is headed by Leonid Hrach, former first secretary of the republican committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

Spokesman Denies Resettlement of Ethnic Germans Abandoned

LD2303222493 Kiev Ukrayinske Telebachennya Network in Ukrainian 1700 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Yuriy Serheyev, head of the press center of Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, today refuted a report which appeared recently in some German mass media. In particular, the report concerned the fact that Ukraine has supposedly renounced its plans for the resettlement of citizens of German nationality to the southern rayons of Ukraine. As Yuriy Serheyev stated, neither the president nor the Supreme Council has given any grounds for such conclusions.

Dollar Rates at Ukrainian Currency Markets Quoted

AU2303202893 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 20 Mar 93 p 16

[Unattributed report published under the rubric "Catalyst": "On Kiev's Black Market"]

[Text] Following two months' lull, the rate of the dollar on Ukrainian currency markets began to increase and over one week rose by 150-200 coupons. The buying price of the dollar today is 2,250 coupons and the selling price—2,350 coupons.

Ukraine's National Bank has habitually been maintaining the rates of the freely convertible currency at a level that is half of that on the market. This is despite the fact that at auctions held by the interbank currency exchange at Ukraine's National Bank, the results of which must, theoretically, be taken into account by Ukraine's National Bank, the rate of the dollar has already been 400 coupons ahead of the official one.

According to the predictions by the "shadow economy" dealers, the market rate of the dollar will rise by another 200-250 coupons. The main cause for this is the instability of our government's "personnel" and policy regarding the currency.

Belarus

Extraordinary Parliamentary Session Opens in Minsk

OW2303182593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1713 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [23 March] an extraordinary session of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet started its work in Minsk. The deputies confirmed the session's agenda at their morning session. They intend to consider a package of legal documents.

The parliamentarians decided to consider an issue "On economic situation and relations with CIS countries." The Belarusian Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich is to make a report on this issue.

The parliament's head Stanislav Shushkevich is scheduled to speak "On situation in the republic and the most important issues of inter-political and foreign activity." The evening session of the parliament is to determine the precise time for their reports.

The leader of the parliamentary opposition's Belarusian popular front Zenon Poznyak insisted to include the issue on confidence in the chairman of the Supreme Soviet Stanislav Shushkevich and Prime Minister Vyachslav Kebich by voting. The majority of votes declined this proposal.

During the session's work several tens of the Belarusian popular front's supporters are picketing at the building with slogans containing appeals to the deputies not to vote "for a military alliance" with Russia. The activists of the opposition movement have called the CIS Treaty on collective security in this way.

Agenda Items Approved

LD2403050193 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1815 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] As a result of a vote, the agenda of the extraordinary 11th session of the 12th Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus includes three groups of issues: the first group includes problems to do with the courts and legal reform; the second group covers the economic situation and the condition and development of economic relations with CIS countries; and there are issues involving cadres.

I will also note that the deputies included on the agenda a report by the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus on the situation in the republic and the most important issues of its internal and external political activities.

Shushkevich Addresses Supreme Soviet

WS2303152093 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1300 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report by Mikhail Rudkovskiy]

[Text] [Rudkovskiy] Before opening the session, Supreme Soviet Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich addressed the deputies.

[Begin Shushkevich recording] I am well aware of your concern over the economic situation, social protection, and prospects for the improvement of people's lives in the Republic. These concerns of public organizations, industrial and agricultural associations, intellectuals, military, and average citizens have resulted in a number of proposals, addressed to Supreme Soviet committees and deputies. The Presidium suggests that the issue of the state and development of economic relations with CIS members be included on the agenda. It should include both the report on what has already been accomplished and the vision of what is yet to be done. Both I and the first deputy chairman for economic issues will actively participate in the discussion of this problem. I am glad that this suggestion covers the proposal to discuss the economic union issue put forward yesterday by the Cabinet of Ministers. It also covers the proposal expressed by the Trade Union Federation. I am asking you to support the Presidium's proposal, to establish a constructive and creative approach, and to avoid wasting time on unprofessional and purely emotional criticism. We must introduce urgent measures to overcome the economic crisis. This joint approach can only be elaborated under the condition of cooperation of all the parliamentary factions and political movements. I wish you fruitful work. [end recording]

[Rudkovskiy] After this, the chairman announced the agenda of the session that includes a number of issues pertaining to legislative reform. These are draft civil and criminal codes, the draft law on the Constitutional Court of Belarus, and others. All in all, there are eight issues. The session elected its Secretariat and solved the question of mass media coverage of the session. The appropriate resolution was adopted. The session, as usual, will be covered by television and radio reports that will include speeches of deputies on miscellaneous issues. There was a proposal to include on the agenda the question of the state of economic relations with CIS members, to introduce changes in the Law on Pensions, and to listen to reports by the Supreme Soviet chairman and the prime minister on the political and economic situation in the Republic, in particular, on the course of implementation of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha agreements. I am talking to Deputy Kharlampiyev from the 134th electoral district.

What is your opinion about the atmosphere in the conference hall?

[Kharlampiyev] The atmosphere was easy to foresee. It is a result of what is going on in our Republic's economy.

There is hardly anyone in the hall who would oppose an economic union with Russia, Ukraine, or any other neighboring state. We do need an economic union. The Republic is facing an economic disaster.

[Rudkovskiy] Is there a way out?

[Kharlampiyev] In my opinion political ambitions must be forgotten.

[Rudkovskiy] Thus neither Shushkevich nor Kebich are to blame?

[Kharlampiyev] The success of any undertaking depends on the leaders.

[Rudkovskiy] All economic laws are currently dictated by Russia....

[Kharlampiyev] Russia does not dictate anything.

[Rudkovskiy] But it is imposing the economic situation.

[Kharlampiyev] This is different. It is imposing the economic situation, but not the legislation.

[Rudkovskiy] How will the discussion of the agenda continue?

[Kharlampiyev] I cannot rule out that the discussion will end up with the adoption of another document that will not oblige anyone. Yet I hope that the majority of the deputies understand that we must make a choice—either we follow the course of reforms, or we stop, give up, and become a province of Russia. During the recent visit by Khasbulatov, it was said that Russian enterprises owe their Belarusian counterparts more than Belarusians owe them. It means that the situation in Russia is even worse. The only solution is to follow the reforms.

Shushkevich Supports Economic Union

OW2303171793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1628 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report prepared by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Stanislav Shushkevich, chairman of Belarus' parliament, has expressed his support for the idea of the CIS member states forming an economic union and suggested that Belarus sign "significant agreements" with other Commonwealth countries not infringing on the republic's sovereignty. "It is clear to me," he said, "that if we lose our extensive economic contacts with Russia we will lose everything."

Shushkevich said he was not going, however, to propose any legislation that would take Belarus off its course to neutrality proclaimed by the republic's parliament. "It is not a very serious exercise to link economic issues to political sovereignty and collective security," he told reporters in Minsk.

IF [INTERFAX] Note: The idea for an economic union was also advocated by Belarusian Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich at a seminar for heads of local administration on March 18. He also said at the same seminar that Belarus should be part of the CIS collective security system.

Shushkevich described as a "shallow attitude to the affairs of state" the apprehensions of some politicians that his recent meeting with Chairman of Russian Parliament Ruslan Khasbulatov would have a negative effect on the Belarusian parliament's relationship with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Citing a telegram he had received from Yeltsin a few days before, Shushkevich said "both Yeltsin and Khasbulatov have expressed concern about the same problems." "Besides, in our telephone conversation, Yeltsin didn't make any objection to my meeting with Khasbulatov," he said.

Shushkevich said setting up a confederation of states had not been brought up during his talks with Khasbulatov. There had "practically" been no disagreements at any point during the meeting, he said, adding that he just drew the Russian delegation's attention to the fact that some of the Russian members of parliament insisted on a tougher policy towards Belarus.

According to Shushkevich, Khasbulatov assured him that the Russian leadership and 99 percent of the deputies took a friendly attitude to Belarus, while the attacks of some of the members of parliament should be ignored.

Shushkevich Calls For Peace, National Accord

LD2303201493 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1900 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The chairman of the Belarusian Parliament, Stanislav Shushkevich, has called for peace and national accord. Addressing an emergency session of the Belarusian Parliament, he described the national situation as critical, and said confrontation was growing between citizens who have different views of the current developments.

Press Conference on Draft Constitution Held

WS2303135393 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] We are striving to build a truly law abiding state. Yesterday, in the Supreme Council, a press conference on the draft constitution was held and Vasil Shaladonov, chairman of the working group, said that the work on the constitution is over. He stressed that all the conceptual guidelines defined by the Belarusian Supreme Council were included into the project. The draft constitution foresees a strong presidential power, and separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The draft document also defines the functions of the president and the Cabinet of Ministers. Next, a new paragraph "High Control and Supervision" was introduced. It will be realized by the High Court, the Office of the Prosecutor, and the Control Chamber. But even elaborators of the draft constitution share different opinions on the new constitution. In the opinion of Valentin Golubev, the draft constitution is worse than that which had been discussed at the previous session. He thinks that the wish to have both a strong legislature and a powerful president can lead to a situation similar to what we are witnessing in Russia.

Summing up the results of the press conference, Vasil Shaladonov stressed that the draft constitution is not indisputable, it should be worked on to become a worthy document enunciating the principles of state building.

More on Draft Constitution

WS2403101293 Minsk RID in Russian 1140 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] A new chapter entitled "Supreme Control and Supervision" has been introduced in the draft constitution of Belarus. It deals with the Constitutional Court, prosecution, and the Control Chamber. The president of Belarus will at the same time be the head of the executive administration and will possess "quite tangible power." This was stated at the recent news conference held at the Supreme Soviet by General Prosecutor V. Shaladonov, chief of the group for the elaboration of the constitution. Speaking at the news conference, Supreme Soviet Deputy V. Golubev said that the draft constitution was an attempt to preserve a nonprofessional legislature in Belarus. He also pointed out that the draft law contained articles that were impossible to implement. Due to this, the new constitution might turn out to be unlawful. The deputy was worried about the fact that the KGB, currently subordinated to the legislature, will, according to the new constitution, be transferred under the president's jurisdiction and included in the Cabinet of Ministers.

Kebich Signs Resolution on Increase in Minimum Wage

WS2303135193 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] According to the government press center, Belarusian Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich has signed a resolution on the increase in the minimum wage. Beginning 1 April, it will amount to 4,500 rubles [R] per month while the first category wage rates will equal R5,000. Wages and salaries of the first three categories will be increased by 10 percent, and the wages and salaries from the fourth to the seventh categories will be increased by 6 percent. The Ministry of Social Protection and the other interested ministries are charged with recalculating pensions, taking into consideration the new minimum wage, and recalculating the sums of scholarships and financial assistance. Unemployment benefits will be increased 1.5-fold, funeral allowances will equal five minimum wages. The resolution can be read in its entirety in the Republican press.

Shushkevich Visits Interior Ministry Unit, Speaks on Reform

WS2303144693 Minsk BELINFORM in Russian 1254 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] On 20 March, Supreme Council Chairman Stanislav Shushkevich visited Minsk Unit No. 7404—one of the oldest in the Interior Ministry Forces. It is situated in the constituency which elected Stanislav Shushkevish a Belarusian people's deputy.

Addressing a grand meeting, the head of the legislature stated that the situation in the country was complicated and that much depended on the work of the law enforcement bodies. "You must defend the law and its implementation. There are no other approaches," stressed Stanislav Shushkevich. He noted that the politicians' duty was to create the conditions necessary for the effective and moral service of the workers of law enforcement bodies. The Supreme Council chairman commented on the work of lawmakers in improving the legal reform and the key legislative acts that had been submitted for the extraordinary session.

Characterizing the situation that exists today, S. Shushkevich said: "The most difficult times in the economy have not yet passed. Unfortunately, neither Belarus nor Russia, Ukraine, nor the Baltics know how to manage independently. There are two ways out—to improve ourselves or to return to the previous situation which was a deadlock. A centralized economy has no prospects. Nor is there a swift transition from the centralized to the decentralized economy."

Country 'Quietly' Leaving Ruble Zone

MK2303150693 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 20 Mar 93 p 6

[Yegor Glukharev commentary: "Belarus 'Quietly' Leaves the Ruble Zone. Exporter Will Sell One Dollar in Five and All Rubles]

[Text] Representatives of the Belarusian leadership continue to state that their republic does not intend to leave the ruble zone. Recent developments, however, attest to the contrary. Yesterday a joint decree by the Council of Ministers and the National Bank of Belarus "On Regulating Settlements With Republics of the Former USSR" was officially circulated. Its content makes it possible to conclude that a national currency is, in fact, being introduced. KOMMERSANT-DAILY correspondent Yegor Glukharev comments on the situation that has taken shape.

Despite the understanding reached in Bishkek at the end of last year by heads of states in the ruble zone (a republic leaving the ruble zone is supposed to notify parties to the agreement at least two months in advance of the introduction of national currency). Belarus is putting its own bank notes into parallel circulation and is adopting decisions that amount virtually to quitting the ruble zone. In particular, the joint decree adopted "without much ado" by the Council of Ministers and the National Bank of Belarus and officially circulated yesterday, envisions a transition to floating official quotations for the monetary units of former USSR republics. Quotations will be fixed on the results of trading at the Interbank Hard Currency Exchange of the Republic of Belarus. This is a de facto recognition of the fact that the Belarusian and Russian rubles are two different currencies, and the decree draws a very clear distinction between the two.

The occasion for the signing of the new decree is innocent enough—to solve the problem of settlements with Russia, namely, to create a reserve of Russian rubles through the obligatory sale of all their rubles by Belarusian commercial structures to the National Bank of Belarus at the official current rate. Subsequently, these rubles are to be sold on the domestic currency market at the exchange-quoted rate. The purchased currency must be used within 20 days to pay for contracts with foreign suppliers, and, failing this, the monies are to be sold back to the National Bank.

According to specialists, the decision to officially float the Russian ruble actually amounts to the introduction of a Belarusian monetary unit. As it tries to solve the problem of settlements with Russia, however, and given the deficit of Russian rubles and the lower purchasing power of the Belarusian ruble, Belarus will soon come up against the problem of devaluation of its national currency, like what happened to Ukraine at the end of last year.

Interestingly, the present decree envisions 100-percent sales of Russian rubles whereas the normal quota for the mandatory sale of hard currency, in particular the dollar, is 20 percent of export takings. Thus, a curious situation arises where Russian rubles are valued in Belarus higher than dollars, and have in fact become a foreign currency.

Moldova

Leadership Wants 'Soonest' Resolution to Russian Crisis

OW2303172193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1630 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report prepared by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Speaker of Moldova's Parliament, Petru Lucinschi, told a news conference today that "the republic's leadership has no exact information on the situation in Russia received through official channels, and the news media reports can be interpreted differently. It's necessary to have accurate information to be able to express one's stand clearly."

The speaker confined himself to stating that Moldova's leadership is interested in the soonest solution to the conflict in Russia's highest echelons of power by democratic means, since a lack of stability in Russia directly affects the situation in Moldova and the present bilateral relations.

State Council Official Hopes Yeltsin Will Overcome Crisis

AU2403095593 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1925 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau, BASAPRESS, 23/3/1993—Vlad Darie, the director of the Service for Political Analysis of the State Council of Moldova, in his interview to BASA correspondent declared that "there is no doubt that pro-imperial and pro-communist forces in Chisinau are waiting for the signal from Moscow to begin a revival of the Soviet Empire." He underlined that they were forces which were identified by President Mircea Snegur in his February declaration concerning the danger of a coup d'etat. It is not necessary for coup d'etat to be made with the help of military forces for it could be established by presidential power by the original status of the CIS proposed for signing in Minsk. Moldova has neither appropriate military forces not suitable political ones to oppose Moscow's forces should they come to power. Vlad Darie expressed certainty that President Yeltsin will overcome the current political crisis in Russia but today Moldova will definitely not join the empire.

Defense Minister, NATO Delegates Discuss European Security

AU2403093793 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1925 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau, BASAPRESS, 23/3/1993—Today the delegation of the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization headed by Colonel Jack M. Petri [spelling as received] had a meeting with Pavel Creanga, the minister of defense of Moldova. This delegation arrived yesterday and represents the Planning Political section in the military domain. During the meeting problems concerning the common basis of security and peace-keeping in Europe as well as different aspects of collaboration in the political, economic, and military spheres were discussed. The aim of the visit of NATO's representatives is to introduce to the Moldovan Ministry of Defense the whole spectrum of problems which will be examined during the summit of the ministers of defense from all European countries planned in Brussels for 25 March.

NATO To Aid in Forming Armed Forces

OW2403114793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1057 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] NATO is prepared to help Moldova form its own armed forces, a NATO delegation told Moldovan Defense Minister Pavel Creanga at their meeting in Chisinau.

Creanga and the NATO officers also discussed basic political, economic, and military principles for the maintenance of peace and security in Europe.

Government Officials Hold Talks With Dniester Officials

AU1903153493 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1928 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau, BASAPRESS, 18/3/1993—On March 17, this year, a meeting between Petru Lucinschi, President of the Parliament of Moldova, Andrei Sangheli, Prime Minister of Moldova and Igor Smirnov, President of the self-proclaimed Moldovan Dniester Republic, and Grigore Maracuta, President of the Supreme Soviet in Tiraspol was held. During the meeting, social and political, financial and economic problems were discussed, states the press communique of the Supreme Soviet. During the meeting, in addition, the communique informs, that they came to an agreement with regard to the opportunity to repeat such meetings and to continue political dialogue until the conflict is resolved. The problem regarding the fate of group of Ilascu was also considered.

Paper Details Talks

AU2003181693 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 19/3/1993—The weekly KOMERSANT MOLDOVI comments on the meeting held by Parliament Speaker Petru Lucinschi and Premier Andrei Sangheli and Tiraspol leaders Igor Smirnov and Grigore Maracuta, which took place on 17 March, in a locality near Tighina. The weekly entered into details which transcend the official communique broadcast by the press service of Parliament. It is stated in the article that participants of the meeting insisted on the idea that Moldova cannot be divided by economic conditions which persist on both sides of Dniester. This time, the discussion of political problems was substituted by talks concerning problems associated with the unfolding of economic reforms, states the article. The weekly declared, based on almost accurate data, that those four dignitaries agreed to the synchronization of economic reforms. The author of the article evidently implies allusions held by local observers who underlined the fact that the meeting occurred in the absence of President Mircea Snegur, the latter being in India. In the opinion of the commentator from KOMERSANT MOLDOVI, the recent political activity unleashed by Mircea Snegur denotes his confidence that despite the fact he is absent from the country, nothing can happen to modify the planned course of action. Referring to Parliament's decision dated 18 March, concerning the creation of a special commission for resolving the Dniester problem, the creation of which was even supported by the president of the legislative body [Lucinschi], the weekly concludes that the phase of semi-amateurish treatment of the problem of integrity of Moldova was surpassed and they will now proceed with serious activity to approach the positions from which confrontation points are located.

Lucinschi on 'Secret' Talks

AU2303153393 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 22/3/1993—During a press conference held today in Parliament, [Parliament Chairman] Petru Lucinschi offered details of the meeting between leaders from Chisinau and those from Tiraspol, which took place on 17 March, near Anenii Noi. He stated that Moldovan President Mircea Snegur expressed his agreement with the organization of that meeting before he left for India. According to Lucinschi the Tiraspol leaders agreed to resolve some economic problems, but stuck to their old position regarding their attitude towards the state organization of Moldova. Igor Smirnov and Grigore Maracuta said that they will not renounce the self-proclaimed Dniester Republic and they want Moldova to become a confederation. From another perspective, remarked Petru Lucinschi, the Dniester leaders did not reject the fact that regions from the left part of Dniester are part of the state of Moldova. The parties agreed to meet each other "from time to time," added Petru Lucinschi. In connection to the secret atmosphere of the meeting, the chairman of Parliament of Moldova said that "the confidential nature of meetings does not affect democratic freedom and is in itself a professional instrument of diplomats."

Dniester Spokesman Says Russia Owes 4 Billion Rubles

OW2303182893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1714 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Igor Mikhailov, a Dniester Republic spokesman, said in Moscow March 23 that Russia owes his republic over 4 bn [billion] rubles but the Central Bank of Russia refuses to transfer this amount. Mikhailov said that he knew from well-informed sources that "the Russian President ordered freezing the Trans-Dniesterian accounts." He emphasized that "this is done at personal requests of certain Moldovan figures." "If we are forced to introduce our own currency, he said, Russia will be the first to lose, for 80 percent of Trans- Dniesterian industry supplies Russia."

Russian National Salvation Front Tiraspol Branch Formed

AU2003181893 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] Tiraspol BASAPRESS, 19/3/1993—A faction of the Front for National Salvation [FNS] from Russia was created in the self-proclaimed Dniester Republic. Today, the leader of the faction from Dubossary, Marina Zaiteva, communicated during a radio program from Tiraspol that she has the authorization to represent the FNS from Russia in Dniester. Previously, a delegation from the self-proclaimed republic from Tiraspol, headed by Marina Zaiteva, participated in the work of the Russian FNS Congress, which took place in Moscow.

14th Army Press Center Opens in Dniester Region

LD2303165693 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1600 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] An Army press center has gone into operation in the Russian Federation 14th Army, which is stationed in the Dniester region. It has been set up because of the urgent need to transmit objective information about the sociopolitical situation in the areas where the army units are stationed.

Mosanu Says Human Rights 'Grossly' Violated in Tiraspol

AU2303134893 Bucharest ADEVARUL in Romanian 17 Mar 93 p 2

[Peter Sragher article: "Violation of Human Rights in Moldova"]

[Text] During the second day of the "International Colloquium on the Reform of the International Human Rights Protection Institutions" [former Moldovan Parliament Speaker] Alexandru Mosanu, the chairman of the colloquium and a deputy in the Chisinau parliament gave a remarkable lecture. Speaking in the spirit of realism and efficiency, which should be the main goals of the reform of the international human rights protection institutions, Mosanu pointed out that after the talks he had held with experts of such bodies, including those of the European Council, he realized that the representatives mentioned advocate models that have been elaborated in and for countries with many decades- and even century-long democratic traditions. As a consequence of that, in such countries as the Republic of Moldova, for instance, the experts' ideas are quite inapplicable.

Mosanu pointed out that the first question foreign experts always ask is whether ethnic minority rights are observed in Moldova, while the country's Romanians have just begun setting up their first state structures. "I always reply to them: 'Have you come to free us from the colonial yoke?'" Mosanu said, highlighting the fact that Moldova has already elaborated the norms regulating the observance of ethnic minority rights, but that the Romanians themselves are not entirely free yet, because they are facing various obstacles, such as a mentality with its roots in the long past era and the attempts by certain political circles in Moscow to re-establish the Soviet empire or the former Russian empire as it used to be before 1917.

Consequently, Mosanu said, experts on international bodies have a moral duty to establish that "human rights are being grossly violated by separatist forces in Tiraspol, who are receiving support from abroad." He also mentioned that six fighters for Romanian rights are being illegally held in prison in Tiraspol, Romanian ethnic citizens living in the Dniester region are forbidden to write with Latin characters or to study in the Romanian language, and that ethnic Romanians who fought in the 1992 armed conflict [in the Dniester region] are forbidden to return to their homes, and some have even been killed.

FPCD Leader Wants Latin Origin Mentioned in Constitution

AU2403130293 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1925 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Chisinau, BASAPRESS 23/3/1993—Iurie Rosca, president of the Executive Body of the Christian Democratic Popular Front [FPCD], today launched an appeal in the newspaper TARA to all people who "feel Romanians should unequivocally plead without any compromise for the unconditional introduction into the text of the Constitution the Latin "Romanian Language" and "Romanian people". While mentioning that "it would be suicide to lose this chance," Iurie Rosca declares that "Moscow through its Fifth Column" in Bessarabia, is starting an "Austrization" [as received] of the occupied Romanian territories from the Eastern part of Prut by constitutionally imposing by bayonet by the Soviet regime of occupation but through the vote of "the whole people," the national conscience which was maimed by this regime.

Kazakhstan

Speaker Meets Khasbulatov, Views Current Difficulties

LD2303214493 Alma-Ata KAZTAG in Russian 1400 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By KAZTAG correspondent Ivan Zakharchenko]

[Text] [no dateline as received] On 21 March a parliamentary delegation of the Russian Federation headed by Ruslan Khasbulatov, which arrived in Alma-Ata the previous evening, had a meeting with the leadership of the Supreme Kenges of Kazakhstan.

The meeting was opened by Serikbolsyn Abdildin. He welcomed the delegation of Russian colleagues on behalf of the republic's parliament. Their arrival coincided with the Naw-Ruz festival—the festival of renewal and spring. This is a good sign, the chairman of the Supreme Kenges said, inspiring us all with hope for success in undertakings great and small.

The countries of the Commonwealth are currently going through a difficult time, he stressed. The peoples are feeling the effects of the destructive policy, the origins of which go back to 1985. The slump in production, which is having a ruinous effect on the state of the economy and people's living standards, is continuing. The politicians who came to power on a wave of criticism of the former Soviet Union have been unable to offer an effective and optimal mechanism for switching to a market economy. As a result they have been replaced more than once, and now there are not many people you can bring to account for the mistakes that were made.

As concerns the position of the leadership of Kazakhstan, it has always asserted the vital need to preserve and develop on a new and equal basis the age-old links between the peoples of the former USSR and the integration of production. As a sovereign state, we are ready to cooperate with any country, especially with our traditional neighbor, Russia, the roots of our friendship with which go back to ancient times.

Today we have to be fully conscious of the significance of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly in resolving the political and economic problems which exist in the CIS. Unfortunately it is still not realizing its full potential. This is why, as a result of the arrival of Ruslan Khasbulatov in the republic—not only the chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet but also head of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly—we are hoping that everything that has been planned in the work of the Assembly will be carried out, and this, in turn, will foster the implementation of the agreements signed at the level of heads of state of the Commonwealth. It is our duty to the present and future generations, and to history, to take all measures to improve the current situation and to raise the prosperity of the peoples of the CIS, Serikbolsyn Abdildin noted in particular.

The parliamentarians discussed issues of bilateral economic relations, the prospects for developing the Inter-parliamentary Assembly, and problems of military development, dual citizenship, and cooperation in passing laws.

Concerning the internal political situation in Russia, Ruslan Khasbulatov assessed Boris Yeltsin's address to the people as another political show. However, the current situation should not be dramatized, he believes. All the problems that have arisen in Russia have to be addressed only on the basis of the constitution in force.

The chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet was received by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Taking part in the meeting, held behind closed doors, was Serikbolsyn Abdildin.

The same day the Russian parliamentary delegation left Alma-Ata for Moscow, having broken off its tour of the countries of the CIS.

Asian Security Council Possible Within 1993

OW2303191993 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1716 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The representative of the Kazakh Defense Ministry in the CIS Joint Armed Forces, Major General Aleksey Agafonov, declared in his interview with Interfax that the idea of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to create a Security Council of the Asian countries "is acquiring more definite forms." For the first time he voiced his proposal at the meeting of this region's heads of states in Tashkent in 1992.

According to the press secretary of Tajikistan's mission in Moscow Rakhim Khasanov, in the future this regional military-political alliance will be "a kind of reaction to the delay in creation of CIS collective security system."

Meanwhile, general Agafonov reported that Russia will also be proposed to join the Security Council of the Asian states along with the countries of the central Asian region. This structure, he believes, can exist independently along with analogical CIS structures. This issue will finally be solved at the conference of the leaders of interested countries, the general said. "We do not rule out a possibility that in the future India, China, and other countries of this region will express their willingness to join the Security Council of the Asian countries.

Progress of Republican Guards Viewed

LD2303213393 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By correspondent Alia Nugmanova from Kazakhstan; from the "Novosti" newscast]

[Text] [Announcer] Exactly one year ago, the Presidential Guards were set up in Kazakhstan.

[Nugmanova] Set up a year ago by President Nazarbayev's decree, the Republican Guards enjoy a special status. This is not an army. Guards are selected by contest. They serve on contracts, and they are the best, those physically strong, resilient and reliable lads. It was a conscious decision not to take young men from the Army, to prevent old habits from infiltrating the new structure.

The Guards have already started guarding the president's residence. This is post no. 1, where the symbols of the sovereign state are kept: the flag and the standard coat of arms. The duty is round the clock. Guards are prepared to work in any conditions, however extreme, be it on land, on sea, under water, on ice, or high up in the mountains. Their duties also include welcoming visitors to Kazakhstan and ensuring their protection. No doubt the Guards will contribute to the cause of peace and understanding with other states.

Another thing. There are no fatigues for the Guards, hence no detention cells. What is there is a strong desire to serve the republic, to protect its constitution, the rights and the freedom of its citizens.

Report on Regular Session of Supreme Kenges

LD2403000793 Alma-Ata Kazakh Radio Network in Kazakh 1500 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] A regular session of the Supreme Kenges chaired by Serikbolsyn Abdildin took place today. Taking into consideration the remarks and proposals on the draft law on the status of judges of the Republic of Kazakhstan which was sent for revision, it was decided that the draft law on the rehabilitation of victims of mass political repressions, on the directing by courts of children and teenagers who committed socially dangerous acts or malicious systamatic breach of the peace to special teaching and educational establishments, on the introduction of amendments to the earlier adopted laws on the internal affairs bodies, on citizenship of the republic of Kazakhstan, and on education will be submitted to the agenda of the 10th session [passage indistinct].

'Re-Formed' Communist Party Denied Registration

PM2303125993 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 Mar 93 p 1

[AZIYA-PRESS report under the rubric "Clearly and Concisely": "Communist Parties in Kazakhstan Beware"]

[Text] The republic Ministry of Justice has yet again refused to register the Kazakhstan Communist Party. The reason cited by the jurists is that the organization is not being formed, but re-formed, although the documents of its 19th Congress transformed the Communist Party into a socialist party. The communists intend to appeal against the refusal, since neither the Constitution nor the laws of the republic forbid the re-formation of parties.

Kyrgyzstan

Vice President on President-Parliament Relations

OW2303172093 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1629 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report prepared by Andrey Pershin, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Vladimir Shishlin; edited by Boris Grishchenko; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature—item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Vice-President Feliks Kulov declared to Interfax that he views the confrontation between the President and Russian Supreme Soviet as Russia's internal affair.

In Kulov's opinion, hot debates are also inevitable at the session of the Supreme Soviet scheduled for April in Bishkek. At the same time Kulov has completely ruled out the possibility of a confrontation between the President and parliament in Kyrgyzstan "on the Russian model."

Vice President Kulov Rejects Corruption Charges

PM1903123993 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Mar 93 First Edition p 1

[RIA report: "Kyrgyz Vice President Rejects Accusations of Corruption"]

[Text] Kyrgyz Vice President Feliks Kulov, who has signed about 50 licenses to export strategically important goods worth 29 billion rubles to China in the last six months, has been accused of corruption by some of the mass media. "I have acted within the framework of the law," F. Kulov stated in an RIA interview. He claims that the strategic raw material has been exported by commercial structures under the reexport system. "None of the Commonwealth countries' state interests, including Russia's, have been damaged by this," the vice president stressed. Following a decision by the Kyrgyz president, the Prosecutor's Office has been tasked with investigating the facts relating to the issue of all licenses by officials. F. Kulov has set up a parallel commission, made up of staffers from the president's apparatus, with a view to investigating the legality of the issue of licenses by himself.

Turkish Chief of Staff Meets With Akayev, Others

TA1903092793 Ankara Turkiye Radyolari Network in Turkish 2100 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] After completing his contacts in Tashkent, General Dogan Gures, chief of the General Staff, left for Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, on the last leg of his Central Asia tour.

According to information received from Anatolia Agency, Gen. Gures met with Major General Dzhanybek Umetaliyev, chairman of the Kyrgyz State Committee for Defense Affairs, this morning. Gen. Gures was also received by President Askar Akayev and Vice President Feliks Kulov and held a meeting with Foreign Affairs Minister Ednan Karabayev.

Gen. Gures will return to Turkey tomorrow after completing his Central Asia tour.

Tajikistan

'Spring Offensive' by Armed Groups From Afghanistan Feared

LD2303132693 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0900 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] There are around 80,000 refugees—citizens of Tajikistan—in the territory of northern Afghanistan. This figure is quoted today by NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA with reference to information of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Nearly all of them support the Islamic opposition. According to an assertion by the Dushanbe press center of the Russian border troops, at least two camps are busy training irregulars from Tajikistan on the territory of Afghanistan. The leadership of Tajikistan, therefore, is seriously worried by the possibility of a spring offensive by armed detachments from Afghanistan.

CSCE Delegation Conducting Negotiations in Dushanbe

OW2403114693 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1057 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] A delegation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe [CSCE], on a visit in Dushanbe, is continuing its negotiations with the Tajik government due to the forthcoming visit of the CSCE leadership to the republics scheduled for April 19.

In his interview with Interfax, Foreign Minister Rashid Olimov stressed that a month and a half ago, Tajikistan addressed the CSCE with a request to consider the situation in the state and around it, to compose grounded recommendations, and to grant appropriate aid to solve problems regarding the domestic conflict.

Turkmenistan

Further on Niyazov Visit to United States, Canada

LD2303114993 Ashgabat Radio Ashgabat Network in Russian 0200 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The presidential Boeing which took Saparmurad Niyazov and an accompanying government delegation from Ashgabat to St.Petersburg, Reykjavik, and Canada landed at New York on 21 March after a 20-hour flight.

The president of Turkmenistan was met at the airport by distinguished political and public figures: former Secretary of State General Alexander Haig; Joseph Hulings, U.S. ambassador to Turkmenistan; James Dematrikis, head of the famous U.S. company Metro Express; important company presidents, and U.S. citizens of Turkmen origin.

Among those who met him was a large group of Turkmen immigrants in New York. They waved Turkmen flags in a rousing welcome for Saparmurad Niyazov, the first president of Turkmenistan. Later, a convoy decorated with the national emblems of our country left for the guest residence of President Niyazov and members of the government delegation of Turkmenistan.

President Niyazov stopped over in the capital of Iceland on his way to the United States. At Reykjavik airport he met with comrade Reshetov, Russian Federation ambassador to Iceland, with whom he had a one-hour talk.

At the Canadian airport the personal representative of the prime minister of Canada welcomed the Turkmenistan leader. He handed over a welcoming letter to Niyazov from Mulroney, leader of the Canadian government, proposing effective cooperation between our countries in the extraction and processing of oil and gas.

Foreign Minister, Iranian Envoy Discuss Role of Islam

LD2303161393 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1254 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Moscow, March 23, IRNA—Turkmen Foreign Minister Khalykberdi Atayev in Ashgabat Monday [22 March] underlined that Islam has a key role in Turkmenistan and expressed pleasure over the upgrading of Tehran-Ashgabat ties.

Atayev made the remark in a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Turkmenistan Gholam-Reza Baqeri yesterday. "The efforts of our enemies to mar relations between Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic will be neutralized through vigilance of the two countries' authorities," the Turkmen minister added.

Expressing pleasure over the improving ties between the two countries, Atayev underlined that both Iranian and Turkmen authorities are determined to promote and consolidate bilateral ties. Stressing that Turkmen culture has long intermingled with Islam, he said that presently 150 new mosques are under construction throughout the country.

The Iranian ambassador praised the Turkmen Government for its efforts to preserve and promote Islamic culture and traditions and assured that Iran-Turkmenistan relations would be further upgraded.

Armenia

Papazyan Views Russia's Constitutional Problems

LD2403110493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1036 GMT 24 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Tigran Liloyan]

[Text] Yerevan March 24 TASS—"What is now happening in Russia was to happen anyway," Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papazyan said today, addressing a press conference in the Armenian capital. According to Papazyan, similar processes are taking place in all the former USSR republics, "in a more calm or more tempestuous form."

In his opinion, the problem is that the Supreme Soviets (parliaments) of former Union republics continue to regard themselves as the supreme authority. Meanwhile, there is no notion of supreme authority in civilized countries. What they have is a clear division of authority. As long as the Supreme Soviets have no clear understanding of what their parliamentary functions are, as long as they seek to concentrate all authority in their hands, such developments will take place, the Armenian foreign minister said.

Karabakh Expresses Readiness for Peaceful Settlement

NC2203212093 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1700 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] Supreme Soviet Foreign Relations Commission is authorized to announce the following in response to the Russian-U.S. and Russian-French declarations on Nagorno-Karabakh:

The NKR understands the concern expressed in these declarations on the continuation and spread of the conflict. The NKR has favored and still favors the peaceful and civilized settlement of the conflict. The path of war is not the path of our choice. That path has been imposed on our people by Azerbaijan, which violates the obligations it has assumed within the CSCE framework for the resolution of conflicts and pursues the objective of exterminating the NKR's peaceful (?population).

Having suffered a few losses at the hands of the self-defense forces, the Azerbaijani authorities are trying to pretend that the NKR is not a side to the conflict, and that it is a clash between [words indistinct] Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In this regard, the NKR notes with deep satisfaction that the calls made in the declarations of the foreign ministers of Russia, the United States, and France—all permanent members of the UN Security Council—are addressed to all the parties involved in the conflict, that is, including NKR, which, as one of the two main parties to the conflict, expresses its readiness to contribute fundamentally to (?ending) the policy of confrontation. [passage indistinct]

Karabakh Fighting, Border Situation Updated

NC2303184593 Yerevan Radio Yerevan in Azeri 1430 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Dear listeners, we now present a report on the latest incidents in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] and on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. [passage omitted]

The Armenian self-defense forces have maintained their counteroffensives on the Mardakertskiy battlefronts. Azerbaijan's military units have been forced to abandon several towns and strategically important heights as a result of fierce fighting once again. Magavuz, (Akop-Kamari), [placename indistinct], and Nerkin-Oratag were liberated by the Armenian self-defense forces last Saturday and Sunday [20-21 March]. According to the information we have received, the fighting is now around Agabekalendzh, which is close to Mardakert. NKR's freedom fighters have been able to capture a strategically important height near Mardakert. The two sides have suffered losses in the clashes. However, we have not yet received an accurate report on the number of their casualties.

Sarkisyan, head of the NKR Self-Defense Committee, has said that the Azerbaijani Armed Forces lost 70 armored vehicles in January and 21 in February. The situation in the other parts of NKR is relatively peaceful, although periodic exchanges of fire occur. Traffic on the Goris-Lachin-Stepanakert highway is moving unimpeded.

Regrettably, the situation in the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains tense. Azerbaijan's provocations have to be blamed for this state of affairs. Armenian border rayons have been fired on with various types of arms almost every day. But the enemy has not been content just to fire on Armenian rayons. It has also tried to violate our republic's border. For example, a group of 50 men attacked Khachik in Yekhegnadzorskiy Rayon with infantry combat vehicles from Nakhichevan on 21 March. The Armenian border guards forced the group to withdraw after suffering casualties. No one was hurt on the Armenian side. Khndzoresk and Nerkin Khndzoresk in Gorisskiy Rayon was fired on from Azerbaijan's Kubatlinskiy Rayon with tanks and artillery guns the day before. Peace was restored after the Armenian side returned the fire. Another town in Gorisskiy Rayon were fired on from Kubatlinskiy Rayon that night. Azerbaijan's military units launched a wide-scale attack after a wave of artillery fire. The onslaught was repelled. Several men where either killed or wounded on the two sides. Armenian and Azerbaijani units exchanged fire in the vicinity of Vakhan in Krasnoselskiy Rayon in the latter part of 21 March.

All this indicates the side responsible for the provocations. Azerbaijan's provocations indicate that it not only wishes to lure Armenia into a wide-scale war but also intends to convince the international community that the confrontation is between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, the incidents have confirmed once again that the neighboring republic's effort will not yield the result it expects. The confrontation is between Azerbaijan and the people in NKR, who have used their right to self-determination in their historic homeland in accordance with the norms of international law.

Supreme Soviet To Issue Credits, Restart Nuclear Plant

MK2303151493 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 23 Mar 93 p 3

[Armen Khanbabyan commentary: "Armenian Nuclear Power Station May Resume Operation, While Depositors Will Get Their Money"]

[Text] On 18 March the Armenian Supreme Soviet made two extremely topical decisions. First is a decree permitting the government to issue credits worth up to 209 billion rubles. Since the republic is in the ruble zone, this sum most likely will be transformed into the state debt that would have to be paid, under an agreement with Russia, in hard currency at the rate set at the time of payment. More, nearly 100 billion rubles will be immediately returned to Russia in payment for energy. The parliamentarians' attention was drawn to Deputy Ashot Bleyan, who stated that taking part in the restoration and development of Russia's fuel and energy complex, Armenia is increasingly finding itself economically dependent on Moscow. Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan, however, argued before the Supreme Soviet that the money was badly needed for investing in industry and solving many social problems. In particular, the issue of credits will make it possible to unfreeze and link by indexation the population's deposits, as well as to update the present poverty line which, in the opinion of the government, would help slow down the growing social tensions to some extent.

The second decision by the Supreme Soviet was sensational: The deputies passed a decree by 138 to 23 votes to repeal the law providing that any decisions pertaining to the question of resumption of operations of the Armenian nuclear power station can only be made in a national referendum. The solution of this problem now is being left to the discretion of specialists and the executive authority, and both the president and prime minister are known to advocate a speedy reconstruction and startup of the station that was closed down following the 1988 earthquake. The positive decision by the Supreme Soviet was not influenced even by the fact that the Liberal Democrats and National Democratic Union factions did not take part in the voting, and the Dashnaks' faction voted against it.

Both negative and positive results of the decision are sufficiently obvious, and if the station is put back in operation, the sword of Damocles of a possible ecological disaster will again hang over Armenia and the vast region of states contiguous to it. Besides, a restart of the nuclear power station can tie Armenia to Russian politics much more strongly than the issue of credits worth many billions: It is from Russia that fuel for the station will come, and it is there that the used elements of fuel that constitute one of the components of nuclear warheads will be shipped. By all appearances, however, the government believes that a positive effect both in the economy and politics will exceed the possible negative consequences. In particular, Armenia will retain the existing scientific potential in the sphere of nuclear power engineering, which automatically places it among the states to be reckoned with. But even if one ignores these circumstances, the resumption of the station's operations will help the republic overcome the present economic crisis, provide the industry and the household sphere with local low-cost power, and weaken its dependence on energy imports—and that, as a matter of fact, also enhances independence of political decision making.

Undoubtedly, putting the station back in operation—something that is no longer a subject of political speculation inside the republic—will become a chip in serious political bargaining at various intergovernmental talks. The bargaining may drag out: According to Premier Grant Bagratyan, even if the government passes in the coming days a decree on the start of reconstruction of the station, the technical difficulties will not permit its restart before next winter.

Azerbaijan

Armenia Reportedly Captures 2 Border Villages

NC2303175193 Baku TURAN in English 1347 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Baku, 23 March (TURAN)—To the night of March 23 sub-units of the Armenian national Army undertook the following attack on the region of Zangelanskiy in Azerbaijan. Aviation, heavy artillery, and armoured technique was used during attack. In the result they gained 4 km of the Azerbaijani territory deep and captured two more villages.

In this connection the press-service of the president of Azerbaijan spreaded the statement. It is spoken in the statement that the next Armenian aggression pursue its object to undermine the process of peaceful regulation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. Its real itogs [as received] of this process were planned for the end of February on the Rome negotiation under the aegis of CSCE.

It is marked in the statement that the next Armenian aggression is classified in Azerbaijan as ignoration of will of the world association and proves that Armenia is going to refuse to annex a part of Azerbaijan. [sentence as received]

By the last information from Zangelanskiy in the result of aggression one man died and 12 were wounded. Measures to repel aggression are undertaken.

Karabakh Ratifies Decision To Introduce Martial Law

LD2303152493 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1400 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] A session of the Supreme Soviet of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic continued its work in Stepanakert today. Deputies have endorsed a decision of the Presidium to introduce martial law in the republic and to form a state committee on defense of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Extended to Year End

OW2303175393 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1714 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [23 March], the parliament of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh republic extended the martial law in Karabakh until the end of 1993 and prolonged the powers of the State Defense Committee, set up last August. The deputies failed to elect the parliament's chairman, because none of the candidates had scored the required number of votes. In view of this, Georgi Petrosyan will continue to act as the parliament's chairman.

The Karabakh Self-Defense Headquarters report from Stepanakert that heavy fighting continues in the Mardakert region on Tuesday. The Azerbaijani army is trying to regain control over the village of Nerkin-Oratag, three kilometers south of the regional center of Mardakert, liberated on March 21. Over the past two days, the Armenian side has lost 5 men and the Azerbaijani - at least 45.

On Tuesday morning, above the limits of Mardakert, the Armenian self-defense forces shot down an Azerbaijani combat helicopter.

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry reports, however, that the border villages of the Kazakh, Lachin, Kubatly and Zangelan regions of Azerbaijan were shelled from Armenian territory last night. Several civilians were wounded, and some of the buildings were ruined.

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry also confirmed reports about the continuing trench warfare in the Agdere (Mardakert) region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Azerbaijani soldiers hit two Armenian tanks and 1 armored personnel carrier.

Legal Action Taken Against Ganja Armed Formation

NC2203181193 Baku ASSA-IRADA in English 1207 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Baku 22.03.93 (ASSA-IRADA)—Azerbaijan office of prosecutors instituted proceedings against the fact of creation of illegal armed formations in Ganja. Arif Aliyev, the leader of presidential press-service said that Ganja armed alignments about 100-200 in number, are subordinated to Surat Guseynov, the former commander of Agdere [Mardakertskiy Rayon] military corps and now the president of "Azersherst" state firm.

According to A. Aliyev's words, the republican Defence Ministry proposed to introduce state of emergency in Ganja. "The situation is under control there now," he said. "In case of emergency government bodies can regulate the situation by force. But it may lead to victims. That's why the government uses all peaceful possibilities for the full lifting of tension in Ganja," he said.

200 Soldiers Defy Defense Ministry

NC2303174093 Baku TURAN in English 1347 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Baku, 23 March (TURAN)—About 200 supporters of the ex-commander of the second corps of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan Surat Guseynov barricaded themselves in one of the military sub-units in the town of Ganja and refuse to obey orders of the leadership of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic.

As head of the press-service of the president of Azerbaijan Arif Aliyev informed, the leadership of the Ministry of Defense announced on its readiness to disarm soldiers, violated the oath. At the same time the authority does not want a bloodshed and suggest rebels to surrender voluntarily.

Ex-commander of the second corps of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan Guseynov was relieved of his post on February of this year after sub-units under his command surrendered their positions practically without serious resistance.

After relieval [word as received] of commandment by sub-units, Guseynov was appointed the director of the large enterprise. But as the press-service informs he has a direct relation to mutiny of soldiers in Ganja.

Authority undertakes all necessary measures to keep events in Ganja under control.

'Sadval' Leaders Threaten Violence in Independence Fight

NC2303175293 Baku TURAN in English 1347 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Baku, 23 March (TURAN)—About thousand and a half supporters of [the] "Sadval" organization arrived from Dagestan to Gusar that on the north of Azerbaijan and held a meeting on [the] weekend.

The "Sadval" leaders claimed if they have no right to establish a state Lezghistan they will start an armed fighting in 1994.

According to those present the extremist statement of "Sadval" leaders provoked disapproval of many inhabitants who made a protest leaving the meeting.

As it was reported "Sadval" organization appears for the establishing of never existed Lezghin state on the territories of Dagestan and Azerbaijan.

According to Russian Ambassador in Azerbaijan Valter Shonia the activity of radical members of this organization contradicts the interests of Azerbaijan and Russia as well.

Aliyev Returns From Iran; Cited on Aid

LD2303192293 Tehran IRNA in English 1514 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Nakhichevan, March 23, IRNA—Nakhichevan Head of State Council Geydar Aliyev said here Monday [22 March] that Iran will not leave the autonomous republic alone in its present crucial condition.

Speaking on the outcome of his recent visit to Tehran, Aliyev said that the Iranian president and foreign minister have reiterated that Tehran would help Nakhichevan.

He said that while in Iran, he discussed dispatch of Iranian humanitarian aid to Nakhichevan and future of bilateral relations.

According to him, the two sides have also underlined the need to construct a road to connect Nakhichevan to the Azerbaijan Republic through the Iranian territory.

Aliyev visited Iran March 16-18.

Trade Agreements Reached

NC2303180793 Baku ASSA-IRADA in English 1216 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Baku 23.03.93 (ASSA-IRADA)—In the nearest days Nakhichevan receives flour, grain, fuel from Iran, ASSA-IRADA was told by the press service of Supreme Mejlis of Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic [NAR]. These deliveries are envisaged by the agreement signed between NAR and Iran in August, 1992. It was discussed again during the official visit of Geydar Aliyev to this fraternal country in the middle of March. The Nakhichevan Supreme Mejlis chairman met in Tehran with Iranian President Rafsanjani, the foreign minister, the ministers of fuel and cooperation, the president of the Islamic Revolution Fund, in Tabriz—with governor of eastern Azerbaijan 'Alizade who is responsible for the control over the deliveries of necessary goods to Nakhichevan. Geydar Aliyev and the fund's president discussed the issue of speeding up in Nakhichevan building of the brick-producing plant (its capacity is 50 mln. [million] bricks annually) and that of mosque which is to be started no later than April 15 and shops manufacturing plastic dishes and henna (paint for hair). G. Aliyev visited the building site for the Hudaferin-Dzhulfa road which will essentially cut the time spent to get to Nakhichevan from Baku.

Velayati To Visit in Apr

OW2303183193 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1715 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Geydar Aliyev, the chairman of the Supreme Mejlis of Nakhichevan (an autonomous republic in Azerbaijan) expressed satisfaction with the results of his visit to Iran, says the Mejlis's press-release, circulated on Tuesday [23 March]. During his four-day talks, Aliyev reached the agreement with the Iranian authorities on the laying of gas pipelines and on increasing the supplies of electricity and raw materials to Nakhichevan.

To quote the press-release, in April, Nakhichevan is expected to be visited by Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Georgia

Shevardnadze Backs Yeltsin, Proposes Meeting

LD2303185193 Tbilisi CONTACT INFORMATION AGENCY in Russian 1336 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] [No dateline as received] Mr. E. Shevardnadze, speaking about Russian-Georgian relations at a meeting of the Georgian parliament today, pointed out that the entire former Soviet Union has entered a new stage. This is a result of the political crisis in Russia. If this crisis begins to boil over, it will lead to anarchy, chaos, and civil war. This is why it is now very important to support the Russian president's platform.

Over the last few days I have been consulting not only with Western politicians, but also with our neighbors. We came to the conclusion that there is no alternative to the platform put forward by the Russian president. And I am very glad that notice has been taken of it, not only in Russia but also beyond its borders.

I welcome President Clinton's statement that he is ready to attend the summit, not in Vancouver but in Moscow if necessary. All the world has an interest in this meeting, our country included. Today we are among the countries which have a clear attitude toward the processes currently taking place in Russia.

Mr. E. Shevardnadze said in conclusion:

"Since the failure of the Sukhumi adventure, when Russia's involvement in the operation was documented, circumstances have become favorable for settling Russian-Georgian relations. I know that there are preparations in Russia for a summit between the Georgian leadership and President Yeltsin. All the prerequisites are there for such a meeting. This event will contribute to overcoming the crisis in Russian-Georgian relations. I have no doubts, the head of state pointed out, that the Russian leadership will keep its word and come to Tbilisi to sign all the interstate agreements. This is the ideal scenario at this juncture."

Official Claims Russian Su-27 Fired 3 Missiles

AU2303182993 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 1520 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] At the initiative of the Georgian Embassy, a press conference was organized for Georgian and foreign journalists in Moscow. Information was supplied at the press conference by Yuriy Keshelava, head of the Abkhaz Information and Intelligence Service.

He supplied journalists with additional information concerning the Russian Su-27 military plane shot down by Georgian Armed Forces [near the village of Shroma in Abkhazia on 19 March]. He pointed out that the plane had been returning from combat actions and three of its six missiles had been fired, leaving two air-to-air missiles and one surface-to-air missile.

Defense Ministry Spurns Russian Statement as 'Lie'

MK2403072293 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Mar 93 p 1

[Nodar Broladze report under the general headline: "Russian Plane Downed Over Sukhumi. Georgian Defense Ministry Calls Grachev's Statement Lie and Provocation"]

[Text] After three days of an intensive bombing and shelling of Sukhumi around 150 civilians were killed and hundreds of houses destroyed. Those affected include Russians, who curse both the Abkhaz separatists and Georgian military commanders. The offensive was carefully planned well in advance and was so large-scale that Georgian military specialists grew even more convinced that the Russian side was interfering in the Abkhaz events.

Bewilderment is growing in Tbilisi over Russian President Boris Yeltsin's silence with respect to the Abkhaz conflict, but despite the difficult situation Russian-Georgian talks continue in Moscow. Still, the question of whether Yeltsin is going to leave Shevardnadze one on one with the Russian military or will choose to interfere in the events remains open. What will determine the president's choice is still unclear.

The Georgian Defense Ministry has strongly protested in response to Defense Minister Grachev's statement. Grachev's allegation that the Georgian Air Force has seven Su-25 type aircraft which have been painted in the colors of the Russian Air Force and bear Russian markings was called a lie and a provocation. His words that the planes bombed their own city were described as blasphemous. "Two days ago the Abkhaz side took full responsibility for the Sukhumi bombing in order to provide its patrons a way out of the embarrassing situation," the Georgian Defense Ministry statement says.

Thus, the Abkhaz side's statement is clearly at odds with that of Pavel Grachev. Grachev, however, has not limited himself to those explanations and is moving on to direct threats. For instance, a statement by the Russian Army's task force in Abkhazia says that in the event of violent actions they will resort to measures aimed at destroying all the resources of the Georgian Armed Forces, and they will destroy aircraft not only in the battalion's territory but also within the five-kilometer zone. In addition, they will destroy aircraft on the nearby airfields. The Georgian Defense Ministry was indignant at the statement that the military and political leadership of Georgia would be held responsible. "An even more cynical statement is that the Russian troops are not involved in the conflict and observe neutrality," the statement says. "One can not help getting the impression that, starting with Grachev's well-known visits to Georgia, efforts aimed at worsening Georgian-Russian relations have virtually become his profession." It says also that the Georgian leadership's proposal to meet with representatives of the Russian Army for talks has produced no results. The agreements about the evacuation of Russian airborne subunits from Eshery have not been observed.

On 19 March the Georgian press carried an appeal by the Georgian parliament to the United Nations, the European Parliament, parliaments of the world, and the Russian Supreme Soviet. It says, among other things, that "the Georgian leadership, proceeding from the interests of good-neighbor relations between the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation, has so far refrained from making official assessments of policies pursued by the Russian authorities in order not to create difficulties in the settlement of Georgian-Russian mutual relations. The Georgian parliament believes that it is time to call a spade a spade and states that the political purpose of Russia's armed actions against Georgia is to tear Abkhazia away from Georgia and to encroach on Georgia's territorial integrity." The parliament called on its Russian counterparts, the Russian Government, and Russia's democratically minded public to take into account all the serious consequences that may result from "Russia's aggressive policy toward a sovereign state." The world community was called upon "not to leave unanswered Russia's aggressive actions vis-a-vis Georgia and to prevent a flagrant violation of international law by political forces seized by imperialist ambitions." The appeal also expresses confidence that democratic forces will stand up against the re-creation of "the evil empire."

National Unity Party Protests Russian Aggression

LD2303234993 Tbilisi CONTACT INFORMATION AGENCY in Russian 1330 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] [No dateline as received] The Georgian State and National Unity Party [as received] and the League of Public Organizations have sent a message to the world's international organizations, the mass media, and parliaments of the CIS, the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, and President B. Yeltsin. The message condemns Russian aggression against Georgia and its desire to wrest the territory of Abkhazia from Georgia.

Advadze Approved as New Ambassador to Russia

AU2303180293 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 1520 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] At the session of the Georgian parliament, Eduard Shevardnadze, chairman of the Georgian parliament, presented the candidacy of Valerian Advadze for the post of ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Russia.

There was a debate at the session as to the procedure to be followed for the appointment of the ambassador. By a majority of votes, parliament adopted the decision to approve Valerian Sergo dze [son of Sergo] Advadze as the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Georgia to the Russian Federation.

This decision was adopted today by parliament.

Valerian Advadze was born in 1931. He was educated as an economist. Until recently, he was director of the Economic Research Institute attached to the Ministry of the Economy. He was elected to parliament by the Union of National Accord and Revival of Georgia. He is a doctor of economic sciences and professor. He is the author of many economic works.

To Leave for Post 24 Mar

OW2303191793 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1716 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In his interview with Interfax Valerian Advadze, who was appointed Georgia's Ambassador to Russia on Tuesday [23 March], declared that "tomorrow he will leave for Moscow in order to immediately start preparation of a meeting between Eduard Shevardnadze and Boris Yeltsin. [no closing quotation marks as received]

Advadze believes that in its foreign policy Georgia should give priority to Russia.

"Georgia's political and economic independence," Advadze emphasized, "is determined and will primarily be determined by its relations with Russia." Advadze is a Doctor of economic sciences, aged 62. He has headed the parliamentary commission on economic reform before his appointment to diplomatic work.

Ardzinba Declares Support for Rutskoy, Khasbulatov

AU2403104193 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0800 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] The CONTACT NEWS AGENCY has informed us that on 21 March, Vladislav Ardzinba [chairman of the Abkhaz Supreme Council] had a telephone conversation with Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy.

The conversation dealt with Abkhaz-Russian relations. Ardzinba openly declared his sympathies for the position held by that group of deputies who are actively supporting Ruslan Khasbulatov [speaker of the Russian Parliament]. Ardzinba promised Rutskoy the support of the Abkhaz people and authorities if necessary.

Sporadic Firing on Abkhazian Positions 23 Mar

LD2303210493 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1430 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The press service of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet today issued a report on the situation in the Ochamchira area. Yesterday and during the night, Georgian troops fired sporadically on positions of the Abkhaz Republic's armed forces from tanks. Fortunately, there were no casualties or destruction.

A temporary lull prevails in the Sukhumi area. Today a representative of the Abkhaz government is flying into Sukhumi in order to solve the question of removing the bodies of those killed on 16 and 17 March.

Abkhaz Front 'Quiet' 24 Mar

AU2403113593 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0800 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] This morning we phoned Zviad (?Mikapia), employee at the Georgian Armed Forces General Staff press center in Abkhazia.

[Begin recording] [Reporter] It remained quiet during the early morning of 23 March at the Gumista River. At approximately 1100 [0800 GMT], the enemy violated the temporary cease-fire agreement again and brought heavy equipment up to their combat positions near the village of (Angvara) and opened fire on our positions in the direction of Shroma and Kamani [Sukhumi Rayon]. The Georgian forces were forced to return fire, which obliged the enemy's heavy equipment to retreat. After this, it was mostly quiet along the whole front line at the Gumista River. There was infrequent submachine-gun fire from both sides. The night passed quietly. At the moment, it is quiet along the entire front.

Zviad, what information do you have concerning Loti Kobalia [one of the leaders of the pro-Gamsakhurdia opposition in western Georgia, former chief of the Main Directorate of the National Guard]?

[(Mikapia)] Kobalia appeared on television and announced mobilization for (Samegrelo) Rayon, Senaki.

(Martvili), and Khobi rayon. He pointed out that the time had finally come for all of Georgia to unite, since the unity of Georgia was threatened with great danger and, given this danger, all Georgians should unite and defend our motherland's territorial integrity. [end recording]

Bridge Damaged by Explosion; Supplies to Armenia Stopped

LD2303175493 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1553 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Tigran Liloyan]

[Text] Yerevan, 23 Mar—As a result of an explosion on a railway bridge over the Khrami River in the south of Georgia, transport links with Armenia have again been cut off. As head of Armenia's railways, Ambartsum Kandilyan, told our correspondent, the act was carried out today at dawn in the Marneulskiy Rayon of Georgia at the Shulaveri-Sadakhlo railway division. One of the bridge's supports was blown up, sending into flight a 60-meter section. Trains between Tbilisi and Ayrum have been stopped.

According to the head of the railway line, a recovery train has been sent to the area of the blast, and Armenian representatives are being sent to Tbilisi to solve questions connected with repair of the bridge. Armenia had been receiving grain, fuel, and other important national economic goods from Batumi (a port on the Black Sea coast) via this railway line. In Yerevan it is believed that this explosion in Georgia's Marneulskiy rayon, where many Azeris live, is a continuation of a series of acts along the gas pipeline crossing this district and feeding Armenia.

Armenians in Gulripshi Threaten To Fight on Georgian Side

AU2303182893 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 1520 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Yesterday, the Armenian population of Gulripshi [Abkhazia] disseminated the following statement:

Dear Compatriots,

The Armenian population of Gulripshi Rayon again expresses its support for those who are fighting to defend the territorial integrity of Georgia; it supports the existence of the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic within Georgia, and we are outraged at the actions of those Armenians who are fighting on the Abkhaz side. The Abkhaz are drawing them into their own ranks by deception or forceful methods. We call upon the Abkhaz side to come to its senses and [word indistinct] establishment of peace otherwise the Armenians will go over to the side of the Georgian Armed Forces on a massive scale.

Ukrainian Mercenaries Said Fighting in Abkhazia

OW2303191593 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1716 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Over 700 Abkhazians were killed and over 1200 wounded in the Abkhazian-Georgian hostilities, Taras Shamba, a leader of the Abkhazian national movement, said at a news conference in Moscow [on] March 23. He said that 380 people from North Caucasian republics fight on the Abkhazian side. He knows from Abkhazian intelligence that 720 West Ukrainian mercenaries fight on the Georgian side now.

In response to an Interfax question where Abkhazians find weapons Shamba said that "whatever weaponry they have has been bought in various republics but not in Russia." Some weapons are taken from the Georgian army.

Journalists were told that "all small states and territories that wage national or political wars within the USSR boundaries" will address the UN shortly.

New Ambassador to U.S. Discusses Staffing Situation

AU2303151593 Tbilisi SVOBODNAYA GRUZIYA in Russian 10 Mar 93 p 2

[Interview with Petre Chkheidze, newly appointed ambassador to the United States, by Eka Akhalkatsi, Lika Kldiashvili, on 4 March, under rubric "Appointment"; place not given: "Our Man in New York"]

[Excerpt] **Petre Chkheidze, former Georgian ambassador to Russia, has become our man in New York.**

SG Dossier: He was born in October 1941. He graduated from the Tbilisi 55th Secondary School and from the law faculty of Tbilisi State University in 1958. From 1963, he held the following positions in the Procurator's Office: practical postgraduate trainee, investigator, senior investigator, investigator in particularly important matters attached to the Georgian procurator. He worked in party bodies. The title of his dissertation was "Murders in Georgia." In 1975, he graduated from the Diplomatic Academy. He worked as first secretary of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Organizations Department ("Incidentally, I sat in the same room as the Russian minister of foreign affairs and his rank was somewhat lower than mine. Some believe that this has had a bad influence upon me. However, I consider that this factor will play a positive role in resolving the most painful questions for Georgia"). From 1978, he worked in New York and was the first Georgian on the USSR representation in the UN. He also represented the USSR in the Fifth UN Committee and was a member of the UN Administrative Tribunal that had representatives from 16 countries. He has worked actively with the representatives of all countries in New York. He was a member of the American-Soviet Commercial and Economic Council.

He speaks German and English. He is married with two children and has one grandson.

We were the first journalists to congratulate Chkheidze on his new appointment and to interview him. "This is a great honor for me and, at the same time, a huge responsibility. After all, I am the first ambassador of independent Georgia to be appointed," he said.

[Reporter] So, Batoni [Georgian polite form of address] Petre, you are leaving the post of ambassador of our republic in Russia. Is the work in the embassy sufficiently well organized and will they continue without you "in the same spirit?"

[Chkheidze] I cannot say that everything has already been sorted out and I cannot say that everything will be fine. There are quite a lot of shortcomings in our work, which are, in the main, due to the fact that cadres have not been brought up to full strength and are also due to financial problems. There are 14 vacancies in the embassy and it is essential to send specialists from Georgia there. I believe that it is precisely there that the necessary conditions should be created so that the embassy in Moscow can start to work at full strength.

I have nothing against those who are working there now, but all this already belongs to the past. New people are needed. Incidentally, very many representatives of the National-Liberation Movement have matured significantly during the last three to four years and they could represent Georgia. We need to place our emphasis on young people.

[Reporter] When are you leaving for the States?

[Chkheidze] I do not know yet. I heard about the intention to send me to New York only a few days ago, and I did not know whether I would be approved until today's session.

[Reporter] According to Foreign Minister Aleksandr Chikvaidze, we will have three representatives in the States. Do you think this is sufficient? Who will be the other two accompanying you?

[Chkheidze] I think that one person should definitely be in Washington; he will work with the department and representatives of other official U.S. structures. As regards the work in the UN, a minimum of seven people are needed because the committees work there permanently and one has to be constantly up to date with all the questions being examined there. Otherwise, there is no sense being in the UN. It does not make any difference whether the questions being discussed there concern your country or other countries. If you do not work on all the questions and speak on them, you will simply be ignored.

However, at the present stage, we are confronted with purely economic problems that need to be resolved as quickly as possible. [passage omitted]

'Zigzags' in Career Noted

AU2303152293 Tbilisi 7 DGHE in Georgian 11-17 Mar 93 p 3

[Article by Giorgi Sanaia: "The First Ambassador to America"]

[Text] On the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and on the decision of Parliament, Batoni [Georgian polite form of address] Petre Chkheidze has been appointed Georgian representative at the UN and, correspondingly, ambassador to the United States. During the last two years, he carried out the functions of Georgian charge d'affaires in Russia.

Batoni Chkheidze is an old cadreman, as they say. He was formerly first secretary of the USSR Embassy at the UN. Such an important post was, as a rule, held by a member of the KGB nomenklatura. Batoni ambassador has given a fairly positive appraisal of his work in his former post.

At different times, Batoni Petre Chkheidze held no less important nomenklatura posts: He was Tbilisi city party committee secretary, department head in the party's central committee administrative bodies....

Persons close to him attribute various reasons to his removal from the Russian representation, principally for being suspected of leaking information and creating financial and administrative chaos.

What is particularly dubious are the zigzags in Batoni Petre Chkheidze's political career. He made mistakes and suffered falls but he always maintained his poise and position. This was probably not only due to his particular political intelligence.

As those persons who bear Batoni Chkheidze a grudge say, he has his hands soiled in many affairs and claim that he was an active participant in many political scandals. They particularly stress some trifles connected with Kitovani's [former commander of the National Guard] and Khetsuriani's [minister of justice under former President Gamsakhurdia] trip to Moscow.

Whatever the case, Batoni Petre Chkheidze is today Georgia's ambassador extraordinary to the United States. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is pinning big hopes on him. It is significant that the head of state did not take part in appointing the ambassador.

Deputies Announce Formation of New Parliamentary Group

AU2403122793 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0300 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] On 23 March, representatives of the Liberal, Green, and National Democrat parliamentary groups held a press conference in the (?oval) hall of parliament and declared themselves to be the founders of an inter-group parliamentary bloc.

Their statement was signed by group leaders Mikhail Naneishvili, Zurab Zhvania, and Irina Sarishvili.

The text of the statement will be published in the press.

Abkhazian Supreme Soviet Adopts Resolutions

LD2403051493 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2046 GMT 23 Mar 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Irina Shchegoleva]

[Text] Sochi March 23 TASS—The Abkhazian Supreme Soviet ratified treaties on friendship and mutual assistance between Abkhazia and the Moldovan Dniester republic, and between Abkhazia and the Gagauz republic.

According to a report of the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet press-service, today's parliament session in Gudauta had opted several other resolutions, including that to grant citizenship rights to specific categories of citizens of foreign states and on organization of local executive power in the transitional period. The Supreme Soviet set up a state committee on repatriation of citizens and nominated Nugzar Ashuba committee chairman.

The session also confirmed the appointment of Abkhazian Supreme Court members and people's assessors. The confirmation of the appointment of the security service head was postponed.

The session adopted an appeal to north Caucasian peoples.

Estonia

Foreign Ministry Statement on Events in Russia

WS2403125893 Tallinn ETA NEWS BULLETIN in English 1529 GMT 23 Mar 93

["Unofficial translation" from 23 March RAHVA HAAL p 1]

[Text] March 23, 1993—Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Estonia is following the development of events in the Russian Federation with great interest, the Ministry press representative announced. The Foreign Ministry has repeatedly expressed its support to President Yeltsin's policy of reforms and democracy in Russia. Estonia is interested in stability in its neighbouring state. Thus Estonia expresses its hopes that despite the gravity of the problem faced by Russia and the political opposition the democratic reforms will continue.

Laar Says Russian Army Units Must Leave

OW2303154893 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1512 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Estonia should respond to the war of propaganda launched by Russia more effectively, said Prime Minister Mart Laar in an article published by the Postimees newspaper on Monday [22 March].

"Greater attention should be paid to the situation of Finno-Ugrian peoples" living in Russia, he pointed out. This problem should be raised on international level, he said.

"The storm units of Russia's army" must leave Estonia as early as this year, the premier said. This relates to the military units stationed in Estonia's capital. His government finds it necessary to establish a strict border regime. The persons staying in Estonia illegally "should be deported," he pointed out.

Luik: Negotiations With Russia To Continue

WS2303114293 Tallinn ETA NEWS BULLETIN in English 1746 GMT 22 Mar 93

[From 22 March HOMMIKULEHT, RAHVA HAAL and PAEVALEHT pp 1, 3]

[Text] March 22, 1993—The Estonian government decided to continue inter-state negotiations with Russia, said leader of the Estonian delegation, minister Juri Luik. "These negotiations cannot be taken as a part of the general political arguments in Estonia as much is dependent on special circumstances. Therefore I would rather not make early conclusions on the next session," Luik said, commenting [on] suggestions to stop the negotiations.

The Estonian National Independence Party and the Entrepreneurs' Party have made a suggestion to stop the negotiations if the sides cannot agree on exact dates of troop withdrawal in April. Luik expressed his regret upon the unsuccessful negotiations at the last session. "We fully understand that the Russian delegation is influenced by the interior situation in Russia and there were worried and irritated voices among the Russian participants," Luik said.

Estonian-Russian relations will also be discussed at the round table meeting on April 2.

President Yeltsin's Advisor Sergey Stankevich met the Estonian Ambassador to Russia Juri Kahn and Director of the Estonian Future Institute Erik Terk on Friday to discuss development of Estonian-Russian relations and use the Muuga port for loading Russian goods.

Terk noted that the Estonian government has just made a decision on declaring Muuga port a free one. According to respective documents and giving the status of a free port enables Russia to use the new port for trading with other countries.

Both sides assumed in relation to the rights of Russian inhabitants in Estonia that the situation has improved.

Military Contingency Plan for Russian Crisis

LD2303113593 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1000 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] A government conference under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Mart Laar which took place on Monday [22 March] discussed the state of national defense.

Colonel Ants Laaneots, chief of General Staff for Defense Forces, told ETA that the government and the defense forces have a strategic plan devised should the situation in Russia exacerbate. If circumstances require, we will act according to the plan, the chief of general staff announced.

Signing of Customs Agreement With Russia Postponed

WS2403130493 Tallinn ETA NEWS RELEASE in English 1516 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Tallinn, March 23—Signing Estonian-Russian customs agreement scheduled for Tuesday [23 March] will be postponed indefinitely.

The Director General of Estonia's National Customs Board, Mati Jurgens, postponed his visit to Moscow initially planned for Tuesday.

The agreement was initialed in January at Estonian-Russian inter-state negotiations.

The next round of Estonian-Russian negotiations is scheduled for the beginning of April.

Oil Terminal Opens; Breaks Dependence on Russia

WS2303114993 Tallinn ETA NEWS RELEASE in English 1914 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Tallinn, March 22, 1993—Estonia broke fuel dependence on Russia by opening a new oil terminal in the Port of Tallinn.

"Starting today, Estonia does not depend on car fuel imported from Russia," Eesti Kutus, said upon opening the Estonian Transoil terminal.

Finnish Neste owns 55 and Eesti Kutus owns 45 percent of the company which opened the first stage of its terminal on Monday [22 March].

Eight receptacles enable to store 4,100 cubic metres of gas and diesel oil and are at the moment filled with car fuel imported from Finland, Margus Poim, the head of the terminal, said.

After the completion of the second stage of the receptacle, 50,000 cubic metres of fuel can be stored and after the third stage is ready, its capacity will amount to 100,000 cubic metres.

State Assembly Amends Citizenship Law

OW2303193893 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1758 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The Estonian State Assembly has adopted amendments to the citizenship law Tuesday [23 March].

Now the country's citizens are those who were recognized as such by the time the existing law in force; persons who are regarded as citizens by international treaties; persons born to at least one parent who was a citizen at the time of birth; and children found in Estonia whose citizenship of other countries cannot be established.

Latvia

Chief Envoy in Talks With Russia Interviewed

MK2303130693 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Mar 93 p 3

[Interview with State Minister Yanis Dinevics, head of the Latvian delegation to Russian-Latvian negotiations, by Vitaliy Portnikov; place and date not given: "There Is No Person in Russia Ready To Sign Treaty With Latvia. Latvian State Minister Yanis Dinevics on Talks With Russia"]

[Text] The latest round of Latvian-Russian talks that just ended in Moscow has given the Latvian side no answer to the main questions—about the schedule for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Latvia and the settlement of property problems. Although the sides, as before, managed to agree on some specific questions, and to initial, among others, agreements on railroad transit through Latvian territory of troops and military cargo, on procedures for the use of Latvian airspace by Russian military aviation, on procedures for crossing the Latvian border by the Russian military, on procedures for Russian military vessels to sail in Latvian territorial waters.... The majority of these agreements, however, are meant for the interim period, whereas the negotiating process between the neighboring countries is a permanent phenomenon. This is why I asked State Minister Yanis Dinevics, leader of the Latvian delegation at the negotiations with the Russian Federation, to reflect on whether this process will not be affected by the ongoing election campaign in Latvia.

"Undoubtedly," Yanis Dinevics replied. "There is little time for the talks. My approach, however, is this: Regardless of whether I will be in the next government, this is something for which we are responsible. Even if it has to be transferred to somebody else, we must do everything to ensure that nobody can reproach us. This is why we have moved on to drafting particular agreements and this is why we are trying to conduct these rounds of talks to the best of our ability."

[Portnikov] How do you assess the tactics of the Russian delegation?

[Dinevics] I cannot say anything especially good. I have this impression: If there is no clarity within the Russian power structures, there will be no man who would dare to sign a comprehensive treaty with Latvia.

[Portnikov] Does this mean that dialogue is proceeding between two structures that are not confident of their viability?

[Dinevics] Mine is a somewhat different situation: My functions were approved at a plenary session of the Supreme Council; I have the authority to sign treaties, whereas Russian delegation leader Sergey Zotov is merely a Foreign Ministry officer with no authority.

[Portnikov] Still, a Foreign Ministry official is not affected by changes in the structures of power, while your powers are limited by the upcoming parliamentary elections in Latvia. How do you think these elections will proceed? In Estonia the "rightists" came to power; in Lithuania, the "leftists;" while Latvia is traditionally "in the middle" of the Baltics....

[Dinevics] In the elections we could also find ourselves in the middle. I do not think that a situation is possible here whereby one party, as happened in Lithuania, will get majority support. After the elections certain coalitions will need to be formed.

[Portnikov] And whose side will the non-Latvian citizens favor? Does it not seem to you that the political elite has lost these voters—compared with the atmosphere of the poll that confirmed Latvia's state independence?

[Dinevics] I do not think that the voters who are Russian citizens of Latvia have any problems whatsoever. They will make their choice based on their sympathies and paying main attention to social problems.

[Portnikov] And still those forces that undoubtedly exist in Latvia and outside and that would like to turn the republic into a kind of satellite of the neighboring state are making preparations not even for these but for the next elections, apparently counting on the discontent among this non-Latvian part of your country's population....

[Dinevics] This trend exists. Our government is a government of the doomed. The next government will also have very serious difficulties. And in the face of such difficulties attaining a high credibility rating will be very problematical. [Dinevics ends]

Sergey Zotov, leader of the Russian delegation at the negotiations with Latvia, stated that the most serious result of the latest round was the reaching of an agreement on the fate of former military enterprises located on Latvian territory. Apparently, their resources will be used to create joint Russian-Latvian ventures, while military production will be converted.

Sergey Zotov stipulated three conditions under which the withdrawal of Russian troops from Latvia may be resumed: The recognition of the status of Russian troops stationed on Latvia's territory; Latvia's agreement that a deadline of before 1993 is unacceptable to the Russian side; and the clearing up of the fate of strategic facilities and Russian property on the territory of the Latvian Republic. Sergey Zotov again accused the Latvian side of taking unlawful actions with regard to the troops and also reminded journalists about certain statements by Latvian politicians which in his opinion have an anti-Russian orientation. Protection of human rights in Latvia will remain part of Russia's international policy, the leader of the Russian delegation at the talks with Latvia stressed.

Parliament Puts Off Extradition Treaty With Russia

OW2303195093 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1923 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] At its Tuesday [23 March] plenary session the Latvian parliament put off until March 30 the debates on ratifying the convict extradition treaty with Russia.

The treaty provides for Russian Federation's citizens found guilty by Latvian courts to serve their terms in Russia and Latvian citizens sentenced in Russia, in Latvia.

Most MPs linked the treaty with the future of Sergey Parfyonov, deputy commander of the Riga OMON [Special Purpose Militia Detachment] special police force who is under investigation in Riga. They do not want him to be extradited or the treaty ratified.

Janis Skrastins, Prosecutor General of Latvia, emphasized that by the treaty the convicts would be extradited following consideration of the application for extradition in every particular case and so the treaty would not necessarily mean that Parfyonov would be extradited.

Skrastins said that seven Russian citizens in Latvian prisons and three Latvian inmates of Russian penitentiaries have expressed their wish to serve their sentences in their countries.

1993 Budget Adopted by Supreme Council

LD2303184493 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1401 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Excerpt] At the Supreme Council today, the budget for 1993 was adopted at the third reading. Its deficit is 2.6 billion rubles. Immediately after the plenary session a news conference was held at which Council of Ministers Chairman Ivars Godmanis, Joint Budget Commission Chairman Valentina Zeile, and representatives of the Ministry of Finance, inspectorates, and local governments participated.

Speaking about the adopted budget, First Deputy Finance Minister Uldis Benikis described it as follows.

[Begin Benikis recording] Today is a great day indeed: at last the budget has been adopted. A critical situation had arisen. There were many many telephone calls to us at the Ministry of Finance, also from local governments. I underscore, in the connection that with the budget's capabilities we were able to finance only one-sixth of the last half year's budget, and this was absolutely insufficient for structures in rayon territories, under the local governments, to function, that is, hospitals, schools, and all the rest. Thank God, today the budget has been adopted and, basically, those structures will receive what is envisioned for them in the budget.

Another question which I would like especially to underscore concerning the budget for 1993 is the question of priorities. I think that [words indistinct] quite frequently publications or remarks have appeared in the press that by the means of the budget we are financing state power, officialdom, and we are (?making it grow fat). I would like to assert absolutely the opposite, by accurately naming the priorities of the budget for 1993.

This budget is unequivocally oriented toward the social security of inhabitants under the circumstances of a deep economic crisis. This is shown by, for instance, the fact that payments for social security and insurance amount to practically 50 percent of the total budget expenditure. The next priority is education, at 13.6 percent; culture at 2.2 percent; and legal matters at 7 percent. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Government Imposes Import Tax on Crops, Flour

WS2403131393 Riga LETA in English 2156 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Riga, March 23 (LETA)—Latvia faces a sharp drop in consumption of crop produced by the Latvian farmers because of its inability to stand a competition with large amounts of grain and crop imported to Latvia from Russia and other countries, which are being sold here for dumping prices.

In order to protect producers and processors of the farming products in Latvia, the government decided late on Tuesday [23 March] to invent import tax also on crop, flour, groats and malt. The amount of tax to be paid for any kilogram of the aforementioned products will be between 0.2 and 0.3 US dollars. The tax on each kilogram of starch will be 50 cents, on a loaf of white bread of 0.5 kilogram—0.15 dollars, on a kilogram of brown bread—0.12 dollars. Import duty to be taxed on soap will be between 3 and 6 cents.

The government decided also to cancel temporarily import of spirit of all kinds and volumes to Latvia, starting from April 1. However, import taxes on soft drinks and grape vines had been reduced to 0.1 dollar per litre and on beer—0.3 dollar per litre.

Each person entering Latvia will be allowed to bring along food supplies in an amount needed for 24 hours only, provided the cost of them does not exceed 300 roubles. It is banned to bring into Latvia products which are to be processed thermally.

The government also decided to allocate 3 million dollars of a loan granted by the G-24, for supplying farmers with 15 thousand tons of diesel fuels necessary to carry out sowing this spring.

Election Commission Discusses Registration of Citizens

OW1903123993 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1150 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] About 1,660,000 citizens have gone on record in the Latvian Republic. 4012 Latvians have been registered in western countries, 928 in CIS states. The figures were cited by Latvia's central election commission at a session held in Riga on Thursday [18 March].

The session noted that the biggest problems with the registration of Latvians remained in Russia since there this could be done only in the Moscow-based Latvian embassy. The opening of Latvia's consulates in St. Petersburg and Pskov is linked to Russia's opening of its consulates in Liepaja and Daugavpils.

Immigration Department Ready To Introduce Visa Policy

OW2003005493 Moscow BALTFAX in English 2019 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Director of the Latvian Department of Citizenship and Immigration Maris Plavnieks announced March 19 that his department is already ready to introduce a visa regime on March 22.

He added that nevertheless it is impossible to solve all problems connected with this issue, although the department's employees have done everything possible to see that the visa regime is effectively instituted.

Plavnieks stressed that this measure is the most important step following the adoption of the Latvian Declaration of Independence, since the state borders will finally be truly realized.

He said that 170 people were hired to the department, in addition to 320 border guards, to implement the visa regime. If necessary, the Latvian Interior Ministry will join the effort.

Before March 22 the department's leadership and the command of the Latvian Border Brigade will visit various border points to operatively resolve problems that may arise in the first few days of the visa regime.

Commander of the Latvian Border Brigade Ivars Redisons said that the greatest problems could arise at the Meitene Latvian-Lithuanian border point, through which trains from Ukraine and southern Russia enter Latvia.

Lesser problems are expected with passengers on trains from Moscow to Riga, since the Russian capital has already been warned of the visa regime.

Until April 18 a special visa regime will apply to citizens of CIS states, by which they will be able to enter Latvia once and remain there without a visa until May 1.

Tallinn Recognizes Independence of Macedonia

OW2303200593 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1924 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [23 March], the Latvian parliament has recognized independence of the Republic of Macedonia.

The Latvian Government has been instructed to hold all the necessary consultations in order to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries in the near future.

Lithuania

President Says Russian Supreme Soviet 'Confrontational'

LD2303154793 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1130 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Address by President Algirdas Brazauskas at the Seimas plenary session in Vilnius on 23 March—recorded]

[Excerpts] Esteemed members of the Seimas: I asked to be given some time today to inform you about the steps I have taken as president after consulting with the government and the Seimas standing foreign affairs commission on the recent events which are well known to all of us—Russian President Yeltsin's statement to the Russian people—which prompted wide and various reaction worldwide, first in Russia itself and in the neighboring states.

The Russian Supreme Soviet, which had been formed from the Congress of the People's Deputies, is clearly confrontational and understands the matters of the state control and the reforms in Russia in its own way. It has become an institution today which according to the words of the Russian leader has had its day. Radical democratic changes are needed in the Russian state. One of the main conditions for the radical restructuring is the new elections to the Russian Supreme Soviet and the statement of confidence in President Yeltsin who had been elected by direct vote of the citizens.

Such a brave and sharp statement made by Yeltsin demonstrates his stance, and understandably it had caused a reaction in Russia. I would not like to give a lengthy comment on the argument which is currently under way or the disagreements which are currently taking place between Yeltsin, the Supreme Soviet, the procurator general, the constitutional court chairman, and leaders of other institutions. I would like to take a look at this phenomenon as we see it and perhaps to formulate a general concept and a common position with regard to this phenomenon.

The relations with Russia which had been developing for quite a long period of time—during the three years after the declaration of Lithuania's independence—have gone through various stages and aspects. However, it must be said that today we are in such a situation that these relations can be continued, that these relations should be based on bilateral treaties and corresponding agreements as well as by various other acts which would render legal grounds to these relations.

Yesterday afternoon, Russian Ambassador Nikolay Obertyshev visited me on his initiative. He also raised some issues concerning our relations and cooperation. Some of them have been voiced before, i.e. legal basis of the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the territory of Lithuania. We received him together with Minister Gylys and we told him that we would adhere to the timetable which has been signed by the two ministers last September and which basically is being carried out. I would put it like this in a rather careful way. We adhere and we will adhere to this document in future, however, the Lithuania side is prepared to sign a relevant agreement on this issue.

We raised some other questions to Obertyshev, specifically concerning the treaty on legal assistance signed last year. Why have these questions arisen so sharply? First of all, because a list of 20 people has been presented to the Russian General Procuracy by our General Procuracy, who have to be interviewed either as the accused or as the witnesses of violent attacks carried out on 13 January on the customs house and on other official services. You are all familiar with these events. The General Procuracy cannot conclude the investigation of these cases because the persons who are suspected in the participation in these operations have not yet been questioned. [passage omitted]

Although we are prepared to sign two treaties on the economic cooperation and on the state border regime, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has not yet found free time to sign these treaties and to receive our prime minister. We expressed our opinion on this, insisting that such a meeting took place in March and that these treaties were signed.

During the visit last week to Lithuania by Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, we raised some questions which are connected with the relations between the Kaliningrad Oblast and Lithuania. I would not say that these relations are in some tragic state, however, they clearly should be improved, specified, and legally defined and appreciated. [passage omitted] One of the most complex issues today that exists in our relations with the Russian Government is demanding guarantees from the Lithuanian Government that Russian goods would not be exported to other countries from Lithuania. [passage omitted]

Taking into consideration the present state of the state borders, the Lithuanian Government can hardly take on such a responsibility and to guarantee that there will be no export of Russian goods through the territory of Lithuania. [passage omitted]

The situation in Russia causes us great concern. We are following the situation. The reports which I received this morning somewhat pacified me, because the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs is in full readiness and is in control of the territory. [passage omitted]

I would also like to inform you that the Russian Government is making efforts to maintain the situation in the economic and financial activities, in settling the accounts and so on unchanged, at least as it had been until now. There seem to be no signals today that we have some extraordinary events taking place there. [passage omitted]

Seimas Adopts Statement on Russia; Stresses Cooperation

LD2303215793 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1700 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Today the Lithuanian Seimas adopted a statement which reads: The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania is profoundly concerned over the situation in the Russian Federation. Being aware of the difficulties [word indistinct] totalitarian state system we express our conviction that Boris Yeltsin, the first president elected by the will of the Russian people, will overcome difficulties and that democratic reforms will be successfully continued. We expect that all problems will be solved peacefully, that people will be able freely to express their will. We also expect that democracy will win in Russia and good cooperation relations will be developed with all neighbors.

Landsbergis Telegrams Yeltsin, Expresses Support

WS2403114193 Tallinn BNS in English 1914 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Vilnius, Mar 23, BNS—Lithuanian opposition leader Vytautas Landsbergis sent a telegram to Russian President Boris Yeltsin Monday [22 March], Landsbergis' secretariat reported.

The telegram offers his condolences to Yeltsin on the death of his mother and expresses support in the struggle for a new democratic Russia.

Communication Agreement Signed With Russia

WS1903094193 Vilnius ELTA NEWS BULLETIN in English 1747 GMT 18 Mar 93

[From ELTA "NEWS BULLETIN" No. 208]

[Text] 18 March 1993—The Lithuanian Minister of Communications Gintautas Zintelis and Russia's Communications Minister Vladimir Bulgak signed, in Moscow, an inter-state agreement on co-operation in the communications field.

General co-operation principles and conditions are discussed in the document. The agreement will be concretized by separate agreements between the post, telecommunications, radio and television and other departments.

The agreement will help Lithuania and Russia quickly resolve urgent communications problems. Most of them arise, because as both were united by the former Soviet Union system of communications, now both states are independent members of the international communications organisation and have pledged to follow i's principles. So far, the international rules are not applicable for the inter-state settlement of accounts. For example, the renewal of the postal order balance would be useful for Lithuania, it would be extremely unprofitable to immediately convert to international settlement of accounts for telecommunication, because their share in the Lithuanian territory is nearly ten times smaller than in Russia.

In the upcoming week, "Lietuvos Telekomas" (Lithuanian Telecom) together with colleagues in Russia will fix tariffs for telecommunication services, and the postal order between the two countries is planned for renewal from the beginning of April.

Brazauskas Addresses Issues in TV Broadcast

Views Economic Situation

LD2103142093 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 0700 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas made a television broadcast yesterday. Having described his visit to Denmark and Iceland, the Lithuanian president spoke about trade relations with Russia and other CIS countries, the economic situation in Lithuania, and some means of improving this situation. He noted that the means of controlling prices are insufficient; the use of foreign investments is not regulated; that businessmen should be encouraged; unemployment reduced; and that local government bodies should take a more active part in our life.

Speaking about agriculture, President Algirdas Brazauskas said that in striving to make production costs cheaper, 13 billion coupons have been allocated to the sowing fund.

Algirdas Brazauskas also noted that there are people inclined toward revolution who very resolutely express their dissatisfaction. But the economy is very inert and it is impossible to do and change many things at once, he said. We must endure this difficult period of time, Algirdas Brazauskas said, and he appealed to everyone to preserve peace.

Supports East-West Balance of Interests

OW2103191293 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1730 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Speaking on national television Saturday evening [20 March], President Algirdas Brazauskas of Lithuania called for maintaining a balance of political interests between West and East. It's necessary to search for goods, fuel and raw materials in the localities that can be useful to Lithuania, he said. He pointed to the expediency of signing agreements with Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

With reference to relations with Russia, the Lithuanian president said that the withdrawal of Russian troops continues. The president and the government, he said, will closely follow the process of troops withdrawal, and "take urgent measures" if it gets upset.

An agreement on trade and economic cooperation with Russia for 1993 has not been signed yet, Brazauskas said. The document should be signed as soon as possible, he added. With reference to the Surgut conference on the problems of oil and gas extraction which had met with extensive response in Lithuania, the president said: "Lithuania will never join associations or unions to be formed there". "Our laws and our convictions are against this," he said.

On March 2-3 Surgut hosted an intergovernmental conference involving former Soviet republics. Participants in it decided to form an intergovernmental council on oil and gas. The relevant document was signed by Lithuania's representative too.

Comments on Visits to Denmark, Iceland

WS2203103593 Tallinn BNS in English 1927 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Text] Vilnius, Mar 20, BNS—Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas, speaking to reporters after returning from his first visit abroad as the president of Lithuania, expressed content with the results of the three days of meetings in Copenhagen and Reykjavik.

Brazauskas met Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, the President of Iceland Vigdis Finnbogadottir, as well as ministers and businessmen of the two countries.

The talks with the Danish premier touched upon the economic and political situation in Lithuania, the issue of the Russian troop withdrawal, changes in Russia's internal situation and their possible effects on Lithuania.

Brazauskas, commenting on his talks with the leaders or the Danish national bank, characterized the Danish banking system as "most suitable" for Lithuania.

The Lithuanian leader also said he had been "a little bewildered" to learn that the Nordic Council had allocated USD [U.S. dollars] 5 million in July for developing Lithuania's banking system. The president in an interview with the national radio said he hopes that the money would be used for its proper purpose.

Brazauskas at talks with officials in Reykjavik discussed the preparation of documents to establish visa-free entry for Lithuanians, as well as plans to adopt a protection of investments agreement.

The Lithuanian president also extended an invitation to the leaders of Denmark and Iceland to visit Lithuania.

Prime Minister Stresses Need for Economic Reform

OW2303193493 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1757 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] At a plenary session of the Seimas the prime minister of Lithuania Adolfas Slezevicius officially introduced to the deputies the members of the cabinet and made a report on the government's program intended for discussion.

The primary aims of the new cabinet shall be the stabilization of the economy, ending the period of collapse in industrial production that reached a frightening scale and curbing inflation.

A. Slezevicius assessed the situation in Lithuania as "profound economic crisis" and said there is no alternative to reform." [quotation marks as received] The reforms according to the program are to develop in the following directions: establishing the competitive structure of the market, creating a favorable environment for the functioning of its subjects and improving the system of social security for the population. Privatization and development of the private sector are to remain the major driving forces of the reform.

The new government intends to reduce the capacity of the Gross Domestic Product redistributed through the budget, reorganize the system of taxation, introduce the national currency when proper conditions for it, presupposed by the memorandum on economic policy, prepared for the IMF, are created.

A. Slezevicius emphasized that price liberalization shall remain government's strategy. Wide anti-monopoly regulation and support of competition are to help stabilize prices.

Creating favorable conditions for foreign investment is considered among the major goals, for as the prime minister put it "without it integration into the western market is impossible." Lithuania's foreign policy, as defined by the government program should be conceptual and pragmatic and is to be aimed at developing closer ties with the EC, strengthening relations with the countries of the Baltic region, the CIS, and the former European socialist countries.

The government suggests participation in the corresponding NATO, UN, CSCE programs and improvement of the State's defence structures as ways to provide the security of Lithuania.

Debates on the program are scheduled to begin on Thursday [25 March].

Defense Minister Meets NATO Officials in Brussels

LD2403133393 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1000 GMT 24 Mar 93

[Text] Audrius Butkevicius, minister of national defense of the Republic of Lithuania, is currently on a working visit to Brussels. He met with General Shalikashvili, supreme allied commander Europe, at NATO Headquarters on 23 March. At the meeting the minister informed the general about the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Lithuania. Cooperation between the Republic of Lithuania and NATO based on the programs set up by the North Atlantic Cooperation Council was discussed.

There are also plans to meet with the political leadership of NATO in Brussels and to visit Stuttgart, where the leadership of U.S. military units in Europe is located.

On 29 March Audrius Butkevicius will take part in a session of the defense ministers of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council.

Visakavicius Appointed New Bank Chairman

LD2303115393 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 0945 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The candidature of chairman of the board of the Bank of Lithuania was discussed at the Seimas plenary session today. With 84 Seimas members voting in favor, Romualdas Visakavicius has been confirmed in the post of chairman of the board of the Bank of Lithuania.

Zilys Appointed Constitutional Court Chairman

LD2303131093 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 0945 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Juozas Zilys has been confirmed in the post of chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania.